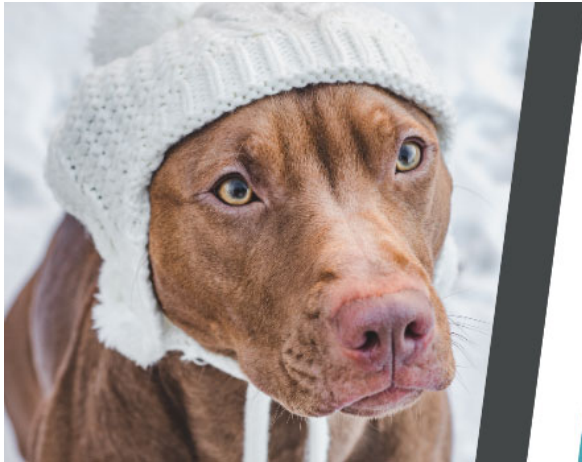


Dilly Deblase

From: Massachusetts Animal Fund <sheri.gustafson@state.ma.us>
Sent: Tuesday, December 26, 2023 12:31 PM
To: asstexecsec@chilmarkma.gov
Subject: Mass Animal Fund Updates for ACOs Into the New Year 2024



Dear Animal Control Officers,

Thank you for all that you do to help our local animals in the Commonwealth! We truly hope that this next year will be a great one for everyone!

Required ACO Municipal Designations

It's designation time again! Every municipality is required to annually report their ACO Officers to MDAR. In accordance with Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 140, Section 151, the mayor of each city and the board of selectmen of each town shall annually designate an animal control officer ("ACO"), who may be a police officer or Constable.

MDAR is trying to reduce the amount of paper we use, so ACO Designations are now being primarily sent over email to ACO Supervisors. All ACO Supervisors can expect to receive this email by January 1st, 2024. Once the email is received, Supervisors need to confirm that all the information is correct or submit any changes by visiting our newly designed [2024 ACO Designation Portal](#). A new feature of the portal allows the municipalities to upload a corrected printout of the email instead of typing in changes.

If the ACO Supervisor email was not received by Jan 1st, or there is a question about the new system, please contact Sheri.Gustafson@mass.gov or call 857-275-9948. Please check your ACO listing on our public database to make sure everything is correct! [The current ACO Public List can be viewed here](#).

Mass Animal Fund Animal Control Officer Training Institute Updates

The next round of Core Competencies Training will take place in the Fall of 2024. If you are unsure if you need to take the ACO Core Competencies Training you can review our [Core Training frequently asked question guide](#), or contact Sheri.Gustafson@mass.gov

ALL 2023 Core attendees who submitted their law quiz and final exam have been emailed their scores, certificates, and letters of completion and have received 16 CEUs. All ACOs, (taking the Core for the first time) needed to submit the Core testing to get credit for the course. If you submitted exams and did not receive the above email, please contact sheri.gustafson@mass.gov.

ACOs that took the Core this year as a refresher, have received 16 CEUs.

Continuing Education

In addition to the Core, all MA ACOs are required to complete 14 continuing education units (CEU) in their first training year and 8 CEUs each calendar year after.

ACO training compliance letters will be emailed to ACOs and Supervisors in late January 2024. Please submit your requests for CEUs through the CE portal (or email) by January 10th, 2024 to make sure they are reflected in those letters.

Submitting all your training through [the CE portal](#) is highly recommended since we get an instant record that can easily be added to your file. Submitting CE certificates via email or regular mail may cause an update delay.

ACOs are responsible for submitting CE Requests for any courses taken since we do not normally get attendance sheets by organization, recent exceptions to this are listed below,

[In It for the Long Haul: Combatting Compassion Fatigue and Enhancing Resiliency for Animal Welfare Professionals \(JCH\)](#) Live webinar 1/25/2024 3 PM-4:15 PM FREE 1.5 CEUs

[The Power of Pets: How Pet-friendly Domestic Violence Shelters Aid Healing, Build Morale and Support Fundraising \(JCH\)](#) Live webinar 3/28/23 1 PM-2:15 PM FREE 1.5 CEUs

[Working with Local Officials to Reach Your Shelter Goals \(AAWA\)](#) Recorded webinar FREE 1 CEU

[The Unicorn Program: Reducing Length of Stay for Large Breed Dogs \(AAWA\)](#) Recorded webinar FREE 1 CEU

Spay/Neuter Voucher Program and Wait-List Status

Together we have helped over 19,800 animals since the beginning of our program! Thanks to another great tax donation year, our current distribution rate is \$60,000 in vouchers going out every month! In 2023, we distributed over \$400,000 in assistance! While that sounds like a lot, it is our busy season and requests are coming in just as fast as we are sending vouchers out.

Our current waitlist has around 650 animals waiting for assistance. We are currently issuing cat/dog vouchers requested near the middle of April 2023. Please let requesters know that once they are on the voucher list, we will get to them, it just takes time. If their request increases in urgency due to a housing situation or a medical emergency they should contact us right away. Likewise, if a voucher expiration needs to be extended, we are happy to provide a new date, just contact Kyle.Baron@mass.gov.

Animals in ACO care and emergency cases continue to be our priorities. If you are requesting emergency assistance please make sure that you contact both Sheri.Gustafson@mass.gov and Kyle.Baron@mass.gov to ensure that the issue is addressed promptly. Emergency Vouchers are always available for life-threatening reproductive system medical conditions! Emergency requests are typically answered immediately upon approval.

For voucher requests for animals in ACO care please submit [ACOVoucherRequestForm](#). ACO vouchers are typically sent out within 48 hours.

For voucher requests for owned animals please submit an [OwnedAnimalVoucherRequestForm](#) (English), [OwnedAnimalVoucherRequestForm\(Spanish\)](#), [OwnedAnimalVoucherRequestForm\(Portuguese\)](#). When submitting, please make sure the form is filled out IN-FULL. Animals will not be added to the waitlist until all fields on the form are completed. Owned animal requests must come from ACOs or veterinary providers, Mass Animal Fund can not process requests directly from owners.

Due to the large number of owned animals on our waitlist, vouchers for feral cat colonies are currently only available for disease response cases or MDAR requests. If you have a cat colony that you need help with, please use this form. [Unowned/ Feral Cat Request Form](#) If you are requesting vouchers for feral cats please keep in mind that requests must be submitted before trapping due to current wait times and availability.

Voucher Days

These are opportunities for high-volume spay/neuter clinics to dedicate a day to voucher recipients. If you are interested in hosting a voucher day and would like to learn more, please contact Kyle Baron at Kyle.Baron@mass.gov
Our next scheduled Voucher Days are:

2/1/2024 at Second Chance in Springfield
2/28/2024 at MSPCA in Boston
3/20/2024 at MSPCA in Boston

We will let you know as Voucher Days are scheduled!

Need to direct voucher recipients to alternative providers? Here is our updated list of [Veterinary Partners that accept Mass Animal Fund Vouchers](#).

Municipal Partnership Option

Do you not have a Mass Animal Fund Veterinary Provider close to you? Does your municipality have an adoption program? If you become a Mass Animal Fund Municipal Partner, you can get funding to spay/neuter and vaccinate animals at your ACO facility and you can get those services done through any licensed veterinarian you choose!

Why? Because, when you sign up as a municipal partner it gives the Mass Animal Fund the ability to reimburse the municipality directly, so you are no longer limited to using contracted veterinary partners for voucher surgeries.

[Click here to find out details and how to apply to become a municipal partner!](#)

The new voucher reimbursement rates went into effect on July 1st, 2023 for all Veterinary Providers and for all Municipal Partners.

Our new voucher rates can be found on our Become a Provider or Municipal Partner Page [here](#).

Tax Season is starting soon, so please help us spread the word about the tax donation option! Here is a link to one of our [2024 Line 33f promotions](#), and keep those stories and pictures of animals helped coming!

MDAR Contacting Information

Our address is:

MA Dept. of Agricultural Resources EOEEA, Mass Animal Fund
100 Cambridge Street, 9th floor
Boston, MA 02114

Contact Information for Animal Health staff members can be found by clicking on [division program pages](#), and on our [MDAR staff directory page](#)

Thank you for being part of the Mass Animal Fund network and for all that you do to help get resources out to our Commonwealth animals!

Take care,



Sheri Gustafson

Mass Animal Fund Program Coordinator

public phone: 617-626-1740

work cell: 857-275-9948 **this is the best number for ACOs to use to reach Sheri at anytime! Text messages accepted, but please include your name.**

Sheri.Gustafson@mass.gov

e-fax: 617-626-1733



Kyle Baron

Mass Animal Fund Community Liaison

phone: 617-626-1790

Kyle.Baron@mass.gov
e-fax: 617-626-1733

**Looking for ACO Forms
and training info? Click
on this link to go to the
ACO resource page.**

***NEW* ACO Animal
Placement Options
Document**

Animal Placement Options for Animal Control Officers



The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) Division of Animal Health is responsible for providing training and guidance to animal control officers (ACOs) and for inspections of municipal animal holding facilities. Recently MDAR has become concerned about animals from municipal facilities being transferred to unlicensed shelters/rescues and municipal officials directing residents to work with unlicensed shelters/rescues. We want to make sure ACOs receive guidance on this matter, so we developed this guide on who is authorized to take in and adopt out animals under the Mass General Laws.

ACOs are responsible for taking in stray dogs found within their municipality. Many municipalities also ask their ACOs to assist with owner surrendered animals, including cats and other domestic animals. Animal Intake forms must be completed for every animal that an ACO has in their custody, and rightful owners must be searched for in every case.

If no owner comes forward, the municipality has a decision to make. It is expected that the ACO will make a rational and reasonable decision – adoptable animals should not be put down, and dangerous animals should not be placed back into the community. For animal placements, ACOs have only four options under the Mass General Laws. These options are return, adopt, transfer, or euthanize and the criteria that need to be met for each option are listed.

Option 1. RETURN

Every effort should be made to return animals to the rightful owners.

Stray dogs are required to be held for 7 days to provide an owner time to come forward and reclaim them. Upon returning a dog to their owner, ACOs must follow through to ensure that the dog is up to date with rabies vaccination requirements and that it has a current municipal dog license. There is no required holding period for cats or other stray animals that come into the possession of animal control programs, but every effort should be made to find their owners as well. Only cats can be returned to field. If an ACO takes in an unsocialized healthy cat, and no owner comes forward, they can be spayed/neutered/vaccinated and returned back to the location where they were found. This process for cats is called Trap/Neuter/Return (TNR). The Mass Animal Fund may provide a voucher so these services can be completed at no cost to the municipality.

If an animal is not returned to the owner, only the below options are available.

Option 2: ADOPT

Animals may be placed for adoption directly by the municipal animal control officer. The ACO is authorized by MGL Chapter 140, section 151A to adopt out animals found within the towns for which they have been designated as animal control officer.

However, running an adoption program is not a simple undertaking. The municipality, not just the ACO, must take into consideration the liabilities that may be involved with adoption programs.

A behavior assessment must be conducted to ensure the animal is safe to be transferred to a new home. If you're not comfortable doing the assessment, ask for help. A REPUTABLE licensed shelter will work with you if it means helping an animal. Training for animal behavior assessments is available from many sources. They are not all the same! Make sure you are working with knowledgeable and respected behaviorists. ANIMATCH is a program through the Mass Animal Coalition that may be available to help you with evaluations. If you are stuck, please contact MDAR, and we can provide further guidance.

It is also important to assess the health status of an animal prior to placing it with an adoptive owner. If the town is conducting adoptions, you should have a relationship with a veterinarian who can examine animals before they are placed (they may need to be spayed/neutered or vaccinated before adoption anyway).

ADOPT continued

Mass Animal Fund can provide ACOs with free spay/neuter/vaccination vouchers for municipal cats and dogs if needed.

The municipality must have a robust adoption contract, approved by the City Solicitor or Town Counsel, that serves to provide some legal protection for the municipality, but also provides adequate safeguards for the animal should the placement not work out. The municipality should also determine what their adoption fees will be (they need to be at least \$3 under the MGLs) and any money collected must be accounted for.

Thinking all these issues through before starting an adoption program will help ensure these animals do not wind up as unclaimed strays in another community.

Option 3: TRANSFER

Domestic animals may be transferred to a licensed shelter/rescue organization.

A Shelter/Rescue is defined in 330 CMR 30.00 as an entity that is not otherwise required to be licensed under M.G.L. c. 129, §§ 39 (livestock dealers), 39A (pet shops), 45 (equine dealers), or c. 94, § 152A (poultry dealers), and whose primary activity is the placement of abandoned, displaced, unwanted, neglected or abused animals. Such entity does not obtain dogs or cats from a breeder or broker for payment or compensation, and is exempt from taxation under § 501(c)3 of the federal Internal Revenue Code or equivalent nonprofit designation under such Code.

For a shelter/rescue organization to be licensed in Massachusetts they must be in compliance with 330 CMR 30.00. ACOs can find a list of all licensed shelters/rescues on the mass.gov website at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/approved-shelter-and-rescue-organizations>.

Scan this QR Code to go directly to the Shelter/Rescue List



If the only available placement for an animal is with a shelter or rescue based in another state, the ACO

TRANSFER continued

must make sure that the organization meets the licensing requirements of the state in which it is located. Additionally, the ACO is responsible for ensuring all necessary import requirements of the destination state (like interstate health certifications) are obtained and provided before shipping the animal out of state. Import requirements for all US states can be found on the USDA's website at <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/pet-travel/interstate-pet-travel>. The ACO must work with a USDA-accredited veterinarian if an OCVI (Official Certificate of Veterinary Inspection) is required for transfer.

Behavior and health assessments should be completed prior to surrendering the animal to a licensed shelter or rescue for adoption. If personnel at the shelter are conducting the assessment, you should be available to observe. Neither you nor the municipality should ever offer an aggressive animal to an adoption group or direct the public to do so. If an animal poses a potential public safety risk, the ACO and the municipality need to address that problem themselves.

RESTRICTIONS: ACOs cannot broker animals, so they cannot transfer animals to pet shops or research facilities. ACOs are also prohibited from transferring animals to any organization or individual that is not licensed. Examples of this would be ACOs transferring a cat to a TNR group that is not licensed as a shelter/rescue but has kittens up for adoption, or transferring animals to a veterinarian that is placing animals with clients.

Please note, that municipal animal control programs are not licensed shelters or rescues. Unless the animal control program is affiliated with a licensed animal shelter or rescue, like a "Friends of (municipality)" type group, or they have a mutual aid agreement in place with a transferring municipality, they cannot accept animal transfers from other communities.

Option 4: EUTHANIZE

Humane euthanasia is an option for an animal if needed.

If it is determined that an animal should be euthanized for an aggression problem or a medical problem that cannot be resolved, the euthanasia must be performed by a veterinarian or under the supervision of a veterinarian. Within the current laws, only the administration of barbiturates is considered an acceptable means of euthanizing a dog or cat. A gunshot is mentioned in 151A specifying that it is only acceptable in emergency situations.

ACOs should reach out to MDAR if you have any questions about the placement options available for municipal animals!

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES CONTACTS

Michael Cahill, Director Division of Animal Health Michael.Cahill@mass.gov	Sheri Gustafson, Program Coordinator Massachusetts Animal Fund Sheri.Gustafson@mass.gov	Kyle Baron, Community Liaison Massachusetts Animal Fund Kyle.Baron@mass.gov	Patricia Cabral Shelter/Rescue Coordinator Division of Animal Health Patricia.Cabral@mass.gov
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Updated Animal Intake Form

Animal Intake Form with Custody Supplement



MDAR's Division of Animal Health is hiring!

Animal Health/Dairy Inspector - (23000DI7)

Description

The Division of Animal Health is seeking an Animal Health/Dairy Inspector. The Inspector will be responsible for inspections of facilities housing animal businesses, and the animals held therein. The Inspector will generate reports based on inspections and follow up with both the facility and the Division to ensure necessary corrective measures are adhered to. Facilities will include dairy farms, pet shops, and other locations where livestock or other domestic animals are kept.

Find out more and apply through MassCareers at:

<https://massanf.taleo.net/careersection/ex/jobdetail.ftl?job=23000DI7>

Official Title: Insptr Hazard Subst/Pest II

Primary Location

: United States-Massachusetts-225 Turnpike Road-Southborough

Job: Compliance and Certification

Agency: Department of Agricultural Resources

Schedule: Full-time

Shift: Day

Job Posting: Dec 21, 2023, 11:46:28 AM

Number of Openings: 1 Salary: 55,446.56 - 75,508.16 Yearly

If you have Diversity, Affirmative Action or Equal Employment Opportunity questions or need a Reasonable Accommodation, please contact Diversity Officer / ADA Coordinator: Gabriella Knight - 8572680629

Bargaining Unit: 02-AFSCME - Service/Institutional Confidential: No

Potentially Eligible for a Hybrid Work Schedule: No

Canine Illness reports

MDAR has been receiving reports of "kennel cough" in dog kennel settings(daycare, boarding, etc.).Below are links to handouts created to address disease prevention in dog kennel settings. Please share as you are inspecting kennels and as you see fit.

[Preventing Canine Illness in Kennels](#) [Parvo Cleaning and Disinfection](#)

Visit the link below for Animal Disease Updates for Massachusetts

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/current-animal-disease-updates-for-ma>

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (New info posted 2/24/2022)

African Swine Fever (New info from USDA posted on 7/28/2021)

Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus (New info posted in Oct 2022)

Eastern Equine Encephalitis

Potomac Horse Fever

Equine Coronavirus

Newcastle Disease in Cormorants

West Nile Virus in Equines and Camelids

Parvovirus ([See Parvo Press Release for Franklin County](#))

The next Mass Animal Fund Advisory Committee Meeting is scheduled for January 10th, 2023 at 2PM. These are open meetings, so ACOs are always welcome to attend! To find out more visit the

[Mass Animal Fund AC meeting page.](#)

or to RSVP or add something to the next agenda please contact

Sheri.Gustafson@mass.gov

Need to add someone to the ACO Newsletter email list? Sign up here.

[View this email in your browser](#)



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You are a Massachusetts animal control officer.

Our mailing address is:

Massachusetts Homeless Animal Prevention and Care Fund
251 Causeway Street, Boston, MA, United States
Boston, MA 02114

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www.mass.gov/AnimalFund

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33. Voluntary Fund Contributions

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