

COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS 3

 Perception of animals is diverse 3

 Shortage of pet services locally 5

 Cost is relative 8

 Meeting pet owners where they are at 10

 Actively prevent the surrender of pets 13

 Participant Profile 14

 Methodology 15

 Interview Insights 16



Executive Summary

The first phase of the Arizona Animal Welfare League’s community assessment project focused on key stakeholder interviews. There were 10 one-hour-long interviews with stakeholders who were influential in the realm of animal welfare OR within Latinx communities living in 85006, 85008, 85009, and 85034. They were able to share the difficulties faced by residents in terms of pet ownership, service accessibility, how and what kind of services should be offered, and information about the cultural lens in which residents viewed pet ownership.



The Definition of animals in the home must be clear. There is a divergent perspective in the Latinx community relative to **“animals”** versus **“pets”**

To gather clear, concise, and accurate information, **the survey context must be easy to understand and well defined.**



Reasons for surrendering animals are often not what they seem. A health issue can easily be disguised as a behavioral issue. For example, a sore paw from an overgrown toe nail could result in aggression or biting.



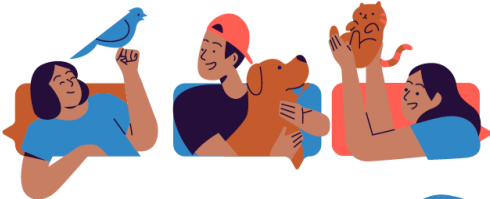
Many pet homing emergencies are really:

- Human housing emergencies
- A result of economic circumstances
- Events outside of the pet owner’s control.



Many residents **don't even have access or the funds to take themselves to the doctor**, so **pet health care** is not a realistic priority.

Bilingual language ability is not the same as language preference.



To provide culturally responsive care, veterinary services must be provided in Spanish or with a professionally trained interpreter. **There is an overall lack of diversity in animal welfare spaces.**



Some Central City communities will need **live, in-person** assistance to make sure the results are inclusive of all pet owners in the community.



STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Perception of animals is diverse

One of the most salient themes emergent from the key stakeholder interviews was idea that families, in particular Latinx families, perceive different animals as having different purposes in their lives.

Multiple key stakeholders who represent the Latinx community, residents from the targeted zip codes, as well as professionals who serve people and animals in the geographic area described a perception that there are “**outdoor**” animals and “**indoor**” animals. The indoor animals were often smaller lap dogs, such as chihuahuas, shih tzus, or mini poodles. Outdoor animals tended to be large dogs, who filled the role as watch dogs, such as pit bulls, German Shepherds, or Rottweilers. This sentiment of indoor versus outdoor animals was described as especially strong among the older residents and immigrants. Participants explained that subsequent generations (second, third, fourth, and sometimes first) tended to deviate from this perspective and view all animals as equal and meant to live indoors, regardless of their breed or size.

“Indoor” animals fit the quintessential idea of pets. In the words of one participant,

“A dog in your home is a family member.”

This perception of “indoor” dogs as family members has an impact on the animal’s care. According to interviewees, animals viewed as family members were more likely to be vaccinated, receive regular veterinary care, and go to a groomer.

“Outdoor” animals were described as less likely to receive veterinary services for a range of reasons. Male dogs living outside (also described as watch dogs) were often not neutered due to a perception that neutering the animal will reduce their territorial nature and ability to defend the home. Participants also shared the perception that there is “no need” to get these dogs groomed.

“My parents have chihuahuas. They spoil them with leftovers and treats. They are overweight because of it. They also have an outdoor dog that is a Pitbull mix. He lives outside as a guard dog. He doesn’t come inside. That’s pretty common. These neighborhoods have high crime and a dog is cheaper than an expensive alarm system.”

“I have a neighbor with an outdoor dog. They also have one in their home. If I let my dogs out at 2:00AM to go to the bathroom, the dog will bark. It’s there summer and winter. Seems like a cultural thing.”

Some communities in Phoenix area host to colonies of **feral cats**. These cats can become a nuisance to neighborhood residents by spreading disease and infections, having an unwelcome presence, and reproducing rapidly. According to one interviewee, about 25 cats are euthanized every day in Maricopa County, due to being sick, feral, injured, or otherwise unadoptable.

One solution for colonies of feral cats is community **Trap, Neuter, and Return (TNR)** programs. Community volunteers will trap feral cats, take them for an extremely discounted or free spay or neuter appointment from a pro-bono vet, and return the animal to its colony. Community member opinion is divergent on TNR programs, like residents' perception of pets in general. Some interviewees described the TNR programs as essential to the health and safety of the community, as well as the most humane way to address a cat colony problem. Other interviewees did not think that community members cared about cats, and that they generally looked past the strays living in their neighborhoods.

“Oh that’s an overly concerned ‘white lady’ problem.”

One interview respondent mentioned TNR programs tend to be the most successful in towns like Sun City or Scottsdale. TNR programs are typically underfunded and run on the charity of volunteers. Generally, the perception was more affluent neighborhoods are less tolerant of cat colonies and the reproduction of stray animals. In neighborhoods with less resources, interviewees described seeing a lot of stray cats. Unlike dogs, stray cats tend to keep to themselves and are not likely to become aggressive when left alone. People don’t realize they are reproducing until the numbers are suddenly very high.



Shortage of pet services locally

Central and South Phoenix neighborhoods were described as generally **lacking any pet services** and veterinary offices. Some residents could not recall a single pet health care office within reasonable distance of their homes in the zip codes of 85006, 85008, 85009, and 85034.

One interview participant described the need for **urgent care** offices in their neighborhood. Due to the closure of an emergency veterinary office and with no other 24-hour facilities in the area, the interview was concerned for themselves and other pet owners who will need to drive far to access after-hours and emergency care.

”As far as I’m concerned, I’d need a visa to go there.”

Participants were generally not aware of residents receiving veterinary services for their pets from local shelters. The Humane Society was mentioned in the general sense, but not referenced specifically in terms of community use.

Traveling outside of one’s neighborhood creates additional cost and logistical challenges for residents. Many households share one car, and it may not be available when needed. Public transportation and ride share services are not helpful for veterinary appointments, as pets are required to be in a crate which many pet owners do not have. Moreover, crating big dogs is nearly impossible and carrying even a small crate is difficult for many pet owners.

“Uber drivers are not wanting to take a 110 pound dog in their vehicle, either.”

Conversely, one interview participant noted AAWL is in a good location to offer services, as it is off of the light rail and bus line. A van was suggested to transport seniors to veterinary services, as many are without transportation, like a “super shuttle that welcomes dogs”.



The hours of available veterinary services are an additional challenge as well. According to key informants, a lot of working people are unable to attend pet appointments during the hours they are available. It can be hard to take off from work and lose income to take care of pet appointments.

“We struggle to fill the free microchip clinic. They just can’t get here. It works best to take a unit into the neighborhood, and it has to be late afternoon or a weekend.”

Prior to the Pandemic, participants described routinely waiting up to four weeks for a veterinary appointment. The **waiting time** has since increased, and owners must choose between a costly emergency vet visit, or the pet's condition potentially getting worse while they wait for an appointment.

Awareness and need of **spay and neuter** services has changed significantly in that cultural perceptions previously prevented households from spaying or neutering their animals are more likely to do so. There are several agencies in the target area that provide this service free or low cost spay and neuter services. However, even the low-cost programs can be challenging for residents. Often the pet owner is still responsible for paying for blood work, medication, and after care. Unfortunately, sometimes this means some newly spayed or neutered animals will not get the follow up care they need. Finally, spay and neuter programs are often at capacity, meaning that pet owners may be turned away. Subsequent discouragement may cause pet owners to change their minds about the spay or neuter surgery. There are multiple spay and neuter programs in the South Phoenix area. One spay and neuter event coordinator described that one event received enough attention to book three community events with a full schedule.

Interview participants described that there is a **lack of vaccine programs** in the targeted areas. Respondents could only reference a couple of organizations (AZ Pet Project and Maricopa County Animal Control), but according to participants these organizations only offered vaccines once per month.

Dental care was a concern for both dog and cat owners. Lack of adequate dental care for pets can lead to additional serious health problems and pain that can cause behavior problems. Interview respondents described dental services as expensive; cat cleanings require anesthesia and dog dental cleanings are needed more frequently. Respondents described that even if community members had the hundreds of dollars needed to pay for pet oral health care, there is still nowhere in the community that provides the service.

Participants mentioned many long-haired dogs do not get the right kind or frequency of **grooming** they need to be healthy. Specialty breeds need specialty care, and according to interviewees, sometimes people don't know this when they select a particular breed. Seniors struggle to clip their dog's nails. A lack of proper grooming can contribute to infections and pain. There is also a lack of **boarding facilities** in the South Phoenix area, and dog services in general.

Behavioral support for pet owners is severely lacking in the area. Petco and PetSmart often have programs for owners and dogs, but they are not affordable.

Veterinary **care in Spanish** is sorely lacking as well. One interviewee described a common situation where a Spanish-speaking community member will receive a voucher for a free service (such as spay and neuter) and was unable to take advantage of the voucher because when they called to make an appointment, no one was available to answer the call in Spanish.

Community members reported they appreciate when there is effort put forth to speak Spanish, even for non-Latinos. One respondent described a "red-headed, white" veterinarian who was providing care at one of the mobile clinics. Her ability to speak Spanish fluently had a significantly

positive impact on the care she could provide. Stakeholders felt that existing animal welfare staff should be empowered to learn the language and offer an incentive for staff members who speak Spanish.

”When you speak Spanish, it makes people feel welcome, even if you don’t look like them.”

One interview respondent described the need to get away from the perception that bilingual people can just speak English. For many, English is their second language, and vet offices should be asking them “in which language would you prefer services?” In some cases, children in the household are attending vet appointments and doing the translation. In the (human) medical community, this is considered unethical and illegal. Children are being asked to translate potentially traumatic things about their pet, and likely lack the ability to convey medical terminology accurately.

Participants shared it is not only veterinary services where Spanish language skills are lacking, but the lack of volunteers and staff who speak Spanish was also observed at shelter adoption events. Furthermore, while Spanish speakers from any background are welcome, interviewees did describe a severe **lack of Latinx and BIPoC leaders, staff, and volunteers** in the animal welfare sector. According to participants, more engagement and encouragement is needed.

Other languages were mentioned as well. Participants described the target area as also being home to refugee populations, immigrant Asian residents, and a substantial group of Somali residents.

According to participants, the animal welfare community needs more professional development in the area of cultural humility. There is a lack of diversity in the animal welfare space in general. Animal welfare tends to be a white, female dominated sector across the board - from leadership to staff, volunteers, donors, and the people walking in the door.



Cost is relative

There were a multitude of variables that affected the perceived and actual cost of caring for pets.

Key informants described residents' perception of the monetary cost of pets was dependent on whether the pet was viewed as a **family member**, or an outdoor animal. For many households, financial investment into the long-term wellbeing of an outdoor animal was difficult and ultimately unnecessary, because those animals were viewed as replaceable. Behavioral issues are described as "just the way they are," especially for outdoor animals.

For some households, the outdoor animals ate only scraps. Food was an added cost burden, and scraps were readily available.

"Growing up, we didn't necessarily buy dog food."

For some families, it's a matter of necessity. Lower income families experience an added economic burden. These household have other priorities, such as keeping the car running, or paying for after school care for kids. All these expenses will come before vet services.

"If you can't afford to go to the doctor for yourself, your pet probably isn't going either."

"They are not even going to the doctor for themselves, from a serious injury that just happens to something preventable. So vaccines and spay/neuter for pets are out. They are not aware there is access. They are also not aware how it affects the pet - for example a vaccine can help animals in the future."

One interview participant described a common predicament for dog owners. Many new dog owners understand that vaccinations are necessary when the dog is young. However, many owners may not realize that these vaccines are needed throughout the animal's life cycle. **Vaccinations** are necessary for a license, and for dogs to be legal in Maricopa County.

"\$150 in preventive care goes a long way. Once a dog is sick, they may be forced to give it up. Once the dog has distemper, a cold, or ticks, an emergency visit is \$300 minimum. Not everyone can afford that."

Given the costs of lab work, testing, vet visits, and shots, **affordable maintenance care** is what communities need, according to stakeholders. All these routine costs tend to go up once an animal is sick. Once an animal is sick and needs expensive care, they are more likely to be abandoned.

“My cat Spooky was abandoned and left on my vet’s doorstep over night. I adopted him a day before Halloween. He had a [urinary tract infection]. Whoever had him probably knew something was wrong and couldn’t afford to take him to the vet.”

Another humanitarian concern that affects the wellbeing of pets is unstable housing. According to interview respondents, when people experience forced housing changes or lack of housing, they don’t know what to do with their pet. Interviewees have observed the COVID-19 Pandemic has increased housing barriers and rates of homelessness.

“Some people don’t know what to do with their animals they can no longer care for. They will let them loose and then there are stray dogs. [...] Families are stable, something happens, next thing you know they’re in a shelter. What do you do now with your pet? Will you be charged if you turn in the dog, do you drop it off at a fire station?”

While paying for spay and neuter surgeries for pets can be expensive, even when subsidized, many residents may not be aware that “reproduction causes a strain economically” on the household. People may not think about the stress that it causes in the household, either.

“It becomes part of the human poverty cycle. The ‘oops litter’ can be overwhelming.”

Some pet owners read online about basic preventative care and administer it themselves. This can be risky, as there is no guarantee information found online is accurate. Pet and animal owners go to an agricultural animal and horse feed store to purchase vaccines for their dogs and cats as a more affordable alternative to a vet visit.



Meeting pet owners where they are at

Key informant interview participants were asked the best way to reach pet owners. There were two main approaches that resonated with interviewees, in-person and online.

Behavioral support was an important topic for key stakeholders. Most interviewees felt training for the pet owners was far more important than for the actual animals. Training an animal is not useful if the person administering the guidance or discipline is not doing it correctly or consistently, therefore training pet parents comes first. The other important questions that emerged was what is the best way to help struggling pet owners keep their animals at home, rather than rehome or surrender their pet.

Online: Key informants thought offering archived, online content was important, especially for younger generations “under 30”. Video format was recommended. Since the Pandemic, online training formats have been in high demand. However, some residents do not have reliable access to high speed internet and are unable to access online content.

In-person: Interview participants also thought in-person training for pet owners was necessary. Many older adults still use flip phones and are less comfortable with email. Parks, veterinary offices, churches, community centers, and other public spaces were recommended as community-based locations. Training opportunities for pet owners without their animals was seen as more effective. Bringing curious (and potentially misbehaving) dogs into an unknown space to meet for the first time would likely detract from any education.

Meeting in a visible location can have an immediate impact on pet owner attendance. For example, one pet service agency set up a mobile clinic in a grocery store (Ranch Market or Food City) parking lot on a weekend. The organization sent flyers to local churches (in English and Spanish) and many people stopped just because they saw the event when driving by.

“But it has to be consistent. Once a quarter isn’t enough. It needs to be every Saturday, or the first Saturday of the month. It can be very low cost, it doesn’t need to be free. There needs to be multiple lessons, at a time [pet owners] can come back.”

Another concern brought up by stakeholders was privacy. Many community residents would not be comfortable having a stranger come into their home, so in-home behavioral support for owners and pets together was not seen as a desirable option. Interviewees explained it can be complicated for pet owners of limited economic circumstances to welcome strangers and professionals into their homes, and meeting in a public space removes the risk of shame associated with that kind of contact.

Messaging campaigns can be an effective way to reach community members. Simple messaging campaigns may be a way to get out information such as the importance of vaccination, licensing, and opportunities for community-based events such as spay and neuter or other pet related events. According to stakeholders, literacy levels must be considered - not all residents can read in English or Spanish. This can make filling out forms and other procedures a challenge. One interviewee described a spay and neuter informational campaign from a decade ago in South Phoenix, which they perceived to be effective.

Interview participants recommended messaging campaigns be made simple and use plain language that is easy to understand. The messaging should be tailored to each community, and describe the benefit that will be extended to their pet should they decide to take action. For example, “spaying or neutering your pet can help them to live longer,” or “rabies vaccines are needed throughout your dog’s life, by law.”

Radio campaigns were suggested specifically within the Latinx community. Radio Campesino was mentioned as an extremely effective leverage point for reaching this community.

Community Action Officers (police officers stationed in school settings, also known as School Resource Officers) were also a strong access point for messages. Officers would provide education to 5th and 6th graders and send flyers home for parents in English and Spanish.

Flyers, phone calls, door knockers: In-person community-based activities should be advertised with physical marketing contact, according to stakeholders. Door to door campaigns using flyers or door knockers have been shown to be effective for opportunities such as spay and neuter events. This kind of outreach could be used for other community pet events such as behavioral support or vaccination as well. Invitations via phone call or text message can be especially effective.

Social media: Social media outlets can offer successful outreach platforms for promoting online and in-person activities. Facebook was brought up by multiple community stakeholders. Nextdoor was also mentioned. Crowds of all ages and demographics can be reached via social media with low or no advertising costs.

Website: Participants mentioned some web users will still go straight to the website of a trusted organization (such as AAWL) rather than searching on Google or visiting a social media page.

Communications, written and in-person, must not belittle or shame pet owners seeking services, especially pertinent to pet surrender. Interviewees emphasized that pet owners seeking help must be treated with respect, kindness, and sensitivity.

One interview respondent was content with how AAWL addresses the “**human factor**” of animal welfare. While multiple interviewees expressed that often individuals drawn to animal welfare are not “people persons,” which can negatively impact how owners are treated. A single inherent bias training is not adequate to change the culture of animal welfare institutions.

“Our staff draw people that love animals, they are not necessarily people friendly. They can be judgmental of humans. They get a lot of training, but once they see that dog coming in they are not going to be nice about it.”

Many interviewees talked about the feelings of shame that may come up when a pet owner is not taking “ideal” care of their animal. Some pet owners will put off problems until they are too serious; one respondent referred to a similar pattern among community members and (human) health care usage. Some households are afraid to seek care or assistance because they are afraid that they will be judged, mistreated, or that someone could possibly take the animal away.

“A lot of pet owners are seniors on fixed incomes from under-resourced communities. They are also possibly embarrassed.”

Conversely, professional development trainers need to understand the situations that animal welfare leaders, staff, and volunteers are faced with on a routine basis. They often witness really difficult situations, and their emotional labor must be handled with sensitivity and appreciation.

Partnering with other agencies was viewed as an effective potential strategy by interview participants. **Churches** came up as a central theme. Specifically, Spanish speaking churches and Black Baptist churches were suggested as access points to reach members of the BIPoC community.

Food banks were mentioned by multiple participants. Sometimes food banks distribute pet food, so an overlap already exists. Distributing information or care vouchers at food banks could potentially help animal welfare institutions to reach new audiences.

A joint health clinic day for people and pets was suggested. Mobile clinics for both people and pets could be co-located on a consistent basis. According to stakeholders, residents would attend.

Wilson School District and Community Center were mentioned as probable points of access for exposure to community members.

“Being IN the community is important. If there is no stake in the community, if people don’t know the resources exist, it doesn’t help.”

Actively prevent the surrender of pets

Stakeholders offered a range of suggestions on how to best assist residents to keep their pets in the home. One participant suggested a messaging campaign using “encouragement to make sure the pet is viewed as a member of the family.” If pets were viewed as essential members of the family, that may shift families’ sense of responsibility or economic priorities. Another referenced **aging animals** have escalated care costs- whether due to prescription food or increased medical care. Increasing pet owners’ ability to care for their pets as family members may decrease pet surrender.

One of the participants described a vision where AAWL has a flag and tab on their home website to reach struggling pet owners that says “**Thinking of surrendering your pet?**” that has potentially supportive resources to troubleshoot the challenges they may face. While attempting to offer supportive resources at the time of surrender can be effective, likely once a person has advanced to that point they have already made the decision. However, a person surfing the web or referring to a trusted website (such as AAWL) is more likely the target audience of surrender prevention outreach.

A specific webpage on the AAWL site could be dedicated to providing resources that potentially prevent pet surrender. Unfortunately, the reasons for pet surrender and rehoming are quite broad, and may stem from myriad issues. One participant described how the lack of access to a \$20 nail trim for larger dogs can result in behavioral issues such as aggression. Similarly, improper grooming can cause pain and distress for an animal, causing them to snap or bite. Recurring issues with gastrointestinal distress could be related to an illness or some other remediable cause. Families moving into a new home may need help with a pet deposit in order to keep their animal.

According to stakeholders, the website could be organized by “reason” for considering rehoming. The reasons could be things like Aggression, Destroying Furniture, Diarrhea, I’m Moving, and other barriers or obstacles that many pet households may face. The website would need to be user-directed, accessible, updated frequently, and presented in plain language. The webpage would also need to be accessible to monolingual Spanish speakers.

Offering **low-cost paid services** such as “a \$20 nail trim” were suggested by interview participants as a way to build trust with pet owners reluctant to get other services, like a low cost spay or neuter. Things like official looking vans and uniforms can be a deterrent for community members. “After years of Sheriff Joe,” as one participant described, there is a fear of the system in general. Some community members may be reluctant to take advantage of services because they are undocumented. Families may be afraid to register their dog with Maricopa County because they are afraid it will make them visible on a government registry. However, registering one’s dog and maintaining the required vaccines may in fact make them less visible, as apprehension of an unregistered dog will result in increased government contact.

Interview participants suggested messaging campaigns related to being a responsible pet owner. Interviewees felt that issues such as animal cruelty prevention get a lot of attention, but often the lack of knowledge can be equally detrimental. Information about license laws and services available at shelters across the Phoenix Valley should be readily available.

Participant Profile

There were ten participants in the key informant interview process. The evaluation consultant sent eleven invitations and received responses from ten people (all of whom were interviewed).

Evaluators used purposive sampling. Key informants were chosen to represent a variety of perspectives deemed important to the project’s lens of equity and community-based experiences among Latinx residents and other BIPOC.



Half of key informant interviewees worked in **animal welfare** spaces. Three participants worked in **human services** positions. Two interviewees held professional positions in human service and spent significant amounts of time as animal welfare **volunteers**.



One hundred percent of key informant interviewees were **pet owners who live in Phoenix**. Many were residents of the targeted zip codes; all participants worked in the targeted zip codes if not actually residents.



Nine out of ten community stakeholders interviewed were female. This is consistent with the general demographic of leaders and actors in animal welfare spaces.



Nine out of ten interview participants were Latinx or from the BIPOC community. Only one participant was white. The Latinx participants included immigrant, first generation, second and third generation Americans. Two interview participants were Black.

Methodology

There were ten semi-structured interviews conducted with a purposive sample of key informants. Participants were selected based on their role as a leader in the animal welfare space or human services specifically in the South Phoenix and surrounding urban area. An emphasis was placed on recruiting interviewees who were from the Latinx or another BIPOC community. Participants were referred from AAWL to the evaluation consultant via warm hand offs. Some interview participants provided additional warm referrals for the consultant.

A semi structured interview guide was created based on the essential research questions. The questions were open-ended and broad in scope so that participants were able to highlight the experiences that were most meaningful from their perspective as leaders or pet owners. Many of the questions were designed to help the team create effective survey questions in the next phase of research. As some interview participants were involved at different levels in the animal welfare sector and other participants less so, not every question applied to each participant.

The interview began with a verbal consent process that explained the purpose of the study and data protection and management assurances. Once the participant had an opportunity to ask questions, all participants agreed to be recorded on a secure server.

The content of the interview began with an open-ended question. Next the interview assessed the participants' perceived level of need for several veterinary services. The interview also covered barriers to accessing these services. A full interview guide can be found in the appendix.

Interviews were conducted privately, one-on-one, via Zoom, an online meeting platform. The technology worked smoothly, and participants and the interviewer were able to view one another via camera for every interview. The interviews were scheduled for 60 minutes, and actual meeting time ranged from 37 to 82 minutes. Average interview length was about an hour.


Immediately following an interview, the consultant reviewed their notes and highlighted any notable themes and quotes for the report. An automated transcription was created through the recording software. The interviewer then let their team member know data was ready for analysis.


The analyzing evaluator coded each interview transcript and notes for common themes. Any notable outlier perspectives were also highlighted. Interviews were dissected with an aim for verifying information, perspectives, processes, and stories. Using the interview questions as a guide, several themes and conclusions emerged. Themes identified by the interviewer and analyzer were compared to audit the data and ensure conclusive themes were independently verified. Due to the small number of interviews, no software tools were needed for analysis.


As with all key informant interviews, there is a potential for the interviewer to subconsciously influence the participant's response. The project was also subject to customary timeline and budgetary limitations. However, the evaluation team did seem to reach a data saturation point with the participant sample engaged.


Interview Insights

There were a few direct applications that can be applied from the information shared in key informant interviews to the other research processes:

 **The definition** of animals in the home must be clear for survey readers. As stakeholders shared there is a divergent perspective in the Latinx community relative to “animals” versus “pets”. To gather clear, concise, and accurate information from community members, the survey context must be easy to understand and appropriately defined. If survey takers are not clear about the survey subject, important data could be missing from responses.

 **Reasons for surrendering** animals are often not what they seem. A health issue can easily be disguised as a behavioral issue. Many pet homing emergencies are actually human housing emergencies resulting from economic circumstances or events outside of the pet owner’s control. Some residents do not even have access or funds to take themselves to the doctor, so ensuring their pet has the health care it needs is not a reasonable priority.

 **Bilingual language** ability is not the same as language preference. To provide culturally responsive care, veterinary services must be provided in Spanish or using a professionally trained interpreter. According to interview participants, there is an overall lack of diversity in animal welfare spaces.

 **The survey format** will be online, which will suit most audiences through a link or QR code. However, some targeted communities (such as older adult pet owners, respondents with limited literacy ability, and those who do not speak English or Spanish) may need live, in-person assistance to make sure the results are inclusive of all pet owners in the community.