

CENTRAL CITY PHOENIX PET OWNER'S ASSESSMENT DECEMBER 2022



Project Conducted by:



Acknowledgements

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- Az Pet Project
- AZK9
- Chicanos por la Causa
- City of Phoenix and Matthew Henson
- Fix Adopt Save
- Maricopa County Animal Care and Control
- Phoenix Revitalization Corporation
- Unlimited Potential
- Valle del Sol
- Wilson Community Center

This project was sponsored and imagined by:



**ARIZONA ANIMAL
WELFARE LEAGUE & SPCA**
ARIZONA'S OLDEST & LARGEST NO-KILL SHELTER

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Executive Summary



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.

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.**

Bilingual language ability is not the same as language preference.



There is a lack of local veterinary services. When pet owners are able to find transportation for pet appointments, **they have to travel** long distances to providers.

Vaccines were the most reported need for Central City Phoenix pet owners.

56% encountered obstacles getting vaccinations

4 out of 10 reported that their animal was not up to date on their vaccinations or had never been vaccinated



Pet owners, especially new pet owners, want a reliable, accessible resource where they can seek information about their animals.



Owners of multiple cats or dogs and Spanish language speakers are **less likely** to have immunized their pet

Married people and people living in larger households are **more likely** to have immunized their pet

What else do pet owners need?

- 26% spay and neuter surgery
- 23% preventative medications
- 23% treatment for illness or injury
- 21% dental care
- 18% advice
- 18% help with behavior

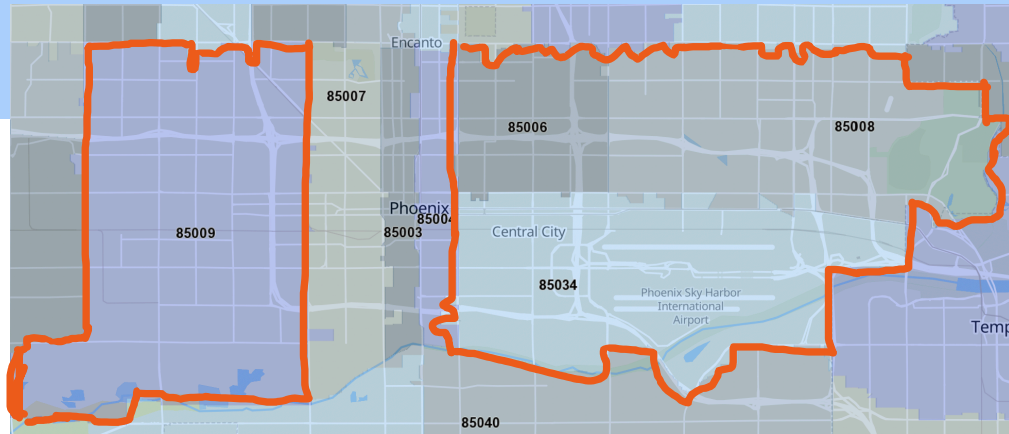
Respondents shared an affordable copay for any services is \$11 to \$25.

Participants described being mistreated by veterinary care providers for having a limited ability to speak English.




Background

The Arizona Animal Welfare League is the largest and oldest no-kill shelter in Arizona. It is a non-profit organization whose mission is “to provide excellent care, protection, and loving compassion for the life of the animals entrusted to us and to take a leadership role in promoting humane values for the benefit of all animals and people.”




As part of serving this greater mission, the Arizona Animal Welfare League (AAWL) partnered with Community Alliance Consulting, a local evaluation firm to conduct a community assessment to determine what kind of veterinary services are needed in Latinx and other communities of color who reside in the zip codes surrounding AAWL shelter sites. This project is the first of its kind. Ultimately, the goal of the assessment is to learn how AAWL can help residents to avoid pet surrender and problem solve to keep pets in their home. The zip codes surrounding the shelters are 85006, 85008, 85009, and 85034 (Central and South Phoenix), shown in the map above. The residents living in these neighborhoods are predominantly Latinx or Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPoC).

Community Alliance Consulting (CAC) specializes in Community-Based Participatory Research approaches which center on the participant residents as experts. In order to maintain fidelity to a Community Based Participatory approach, the CAC team relied on the following two pillars:

 **Community-centered approach:** The assessment relied on a community-centered approach, which borrows from best practices formalized under the client-centricⁱ approach. This evaluative research emphasizes the sharing of results with the communities that contribute information. The aim is to create value for the communities directly. The community-centered approach to evaluation research requires extra time and resources, and an additional step to disseminate research outcomes to the contributing community. It also ensures the priorities of surveyed


communities are included in the work. The benefits include potentially greater and more authentic participation and better contextualization of results. Pilot-testing is also necessary to ensure a community-centered approachⁱⁱ. Key stakeholders (such as interviewees) served as access points for feedback.

 **Racial Equity lens:** Another important piece of effective community engagement was using an approach that is mindful of the needs of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPoC). With a focus on Latinx communities, principles of cultural humility and authentic inclusion were central to the success of the project. Several aspects tailored to the BIPoC community were infused into the evaluation approach. According to best practice methodology, racial and ethnic minority populations were over-sampledⁱⁱⁱ to ensure an adequate representation of Latinx participants, and so that any unique community needs or assets that differ from the general population were visible through data analysis.


CAC used professional, native-speaker translators to follow best practices^{iv} in terms of cultural inclusivity and consideration of all reading levels. After a translations of research tools, they were reviewed for clarity and understanding by fellow project stakeholders (such as interviewees) who are also native speakers for appropriate use of colloquial dialect. This process was paired with and supported the pilot testing phase, referenced in the community-centered approach^v.


Finally, the project was designed with an overall lens of cultural humility^{vi}. Participants are experts in their own experience, and their words are valuable data. The researchers are trained to phrase questions with respect, curiosity, and without bias. Efforts were made to include hard-to-reach populations by project partners (volunteer, staff, or contract workers) to include communities of interest. Demographic questions were posed with consideration of inclusivity and sensitivity. In general, research approaches begin with ideas that are easy for respondents to consider, and more nuanced or personal questions assessed toward the end.

Three main research methods were used in this assessment to offer triangulation of data. When a mix of methods is used (such as qualitative and quantitative) and opposing perspectives considered (such as community leaders and neighborhood residents) the data provides a rich context from which to pull themes and important differing perspectives. Using a racial-equity centered, community-based lens, the CAC team constructed three phases of evaluation research to learn about what residents need to be excellent pet owners.

 **Key Stakeholder Interviews:** The first phase of this project focused on key stakeholder interviews. An evaluation consultant scheduled one-hour interviews

with ten community stakeholders who were influential in the realm of animal welfare, or the Latinx communities in the targeted zip codes. This qualitative interview approach served to tailor the nuances of the survey questions, used in the next project phase. Key stakeholders were able to share information about the difficulties faced by residents in terms of owning pets and animals, what kind of services might be beneficial to the community, in what format services should be offered, as well as informing about the cultural lens through which many residents view pet ownership and service-seeking behaviors.

 **Community member survey:** This phase of evaluation research consisted of a large-scale evaluation survey. A goal of 600 responses was met, with the intention of over-sampling the Latinx and BIPoC community. This research method provides quantitative information about resident perspectives, needs, barriers, and pet parent demographics. The survey was available in both English and Spanish.

 **Community member focus groups:** The third phase of the assessment relied on the focus group methodology. This approach was used to explain the information learned through the community survey. While the survey method tells researchers “the way things are,” focus groups allow the exploration of “why things may be”. This qualitative data approach will give context and richness to the survey data.





Major Findings

Across the three evaluative research methods used, including key informant interviews, community member focus groups, and the Central Phoenix resident survey, several themes emerged. These findings will be presented in this summative report, blending all three data methods. For a detailed description of each evaluative research approach, including methods, the instruments used, demographics, and detailed findings, please see the full reports. As recruitment and sampling goals were met, this report serves as generally applicable to pet owners in Central City Phoenix, especially from the Hispanic and Latinx community. A brief description of participants is offered at the end of this report.

There were three main take-aways from the Arizona Animal Welfare League's pet ownership assessment:

- *There is a lack of culturally responsive and linguistically appropriate veterinary care in Central City Phoenix.*
- *The most profound disparities in access to vet care among pet owners in the region were found between English speakers and Spanish speakers.*
- *The greatest needs for pet owners locally are access to vaccinations and information.*

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

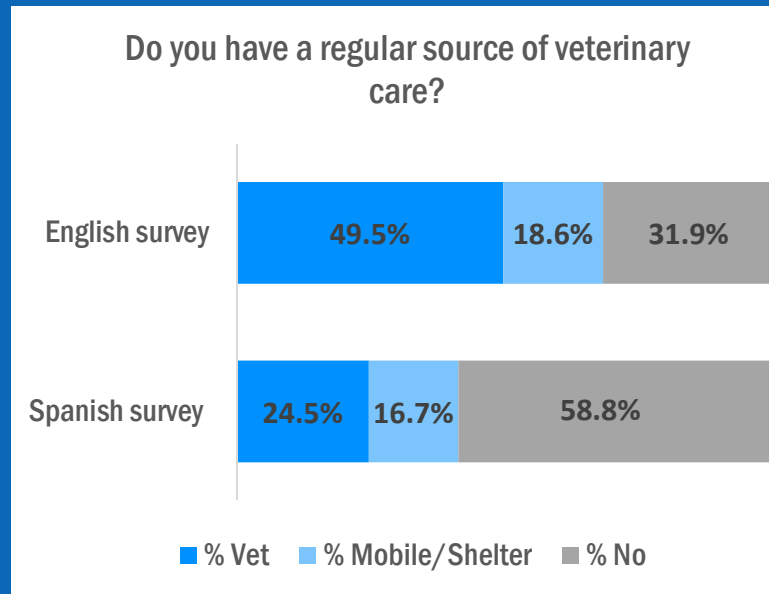
-Key Community Stakeholder, referring to the nearest full veterinary office.

“[The veterinary office staff and doctors] don’t speak Spanish; I need to bring someone with me who speaks English so I can know what they’re asking.”

-Community Focus Group participant

“You have to take a whole day off of work just to drop them off.”

-Community Focus Group participant



There is a lack of culturally responsive and linguistically appropriate veterinary care in Central City Phoenix.

While there are a limited number of private veterinary service providers in Central City Phoenix, as well as several shelter providers such as AAWL, nonetheless there is a perceived **lack of veterinary health care providers** in the region among residents, and very **few that provide service in Spanish.**

According to community stakeholders, there is a **lack of Hispanic and Latinx** leaders in the animal welfare spaces, and a **lack of diversity** in general among veterinary providers, staff, and

volunteers. Further, focus group participants shared that even if the provider is not Hispanic or Latinx, it is still meaningful and helpful when they speak Spanish.

In all phases of assessment, it was found that **bilingual language ability is not equal to language preference.** Many assessment participants were bilingual, but still preferred service in Spanish, which was nearly impossible to find.

Differences in **cultural perceptions** pertaining **to pets versus animals** were an important contextual theme. Second and third generation participants seemed to be more likely to house their animals indoors all of the time, and to ensure they receive comprehensive care.

44%

lack a regular place for veterinary care

58%

cannot afford the care they need for their pet

55%

prefer veterinary services in Spanish

\$11 - 25

represents a copay community members could afford

The most profound disparities in access to vet care among pet owners in the region were found between English speakers and Spanish speakers.

The disparity between English speakers and Spanish speakers was greater than all other observed disparities, including between racial and ethnic groups (such as white versus Hispanic/Latinx) or generational status. Spanish language survey respondents were *less likely to have a regular source of clinic-based veterinary care and more likely to have no regular source of care at all, including mobile or shelter veterinary service care.*

Spanish language survey respondents were less likely to request behavioral help for their animals. They were also less likely to report vaccinating their pets. Focus group participants described relying on their children as interpreters at appointments, which can be especially difficult when the conversations contain medical terminology or heavy emotional content, such as end-of-life or treatment decisions.



64%

English survey respondents
up to date on vaccinations

54%

Spanish survey respondents
up to date on vaccinations

50%

English survey respondents
have a regular vet

25%

Spanish survey respondents
have a regular vet

English language survey respondents were more likely to allow their pets to live indoors full time (86% versus 75% among Spanish language respondents) and English survey respondents were also more likely to feed community cats (47% versus 18%).

The greatest needs for pet owners locally are access to vaccinations and information.

Among AAWL survey participants, the greatest identified need was for vaccinations. According to the community survey, just 59% of pet owners in Central City reported that their pets are completely up to date on their recommended vaccines. Another 16% reported it had been more than two years, and 13% not since their pets were kittens or puppies.

“Is there a place you can get haircut and nails with vaccines? Because you can’t get grooming without that. I like the idea of a place you could get vaccines followed by a cut and trim.”

-Focus group participant

Other needs mentioned by survey participants included spay or neuter surgery (26%), heartworm, flea, and tick prevention (23%), and treatment for and illness or injury (23%). Dental care was

also cited as a need by 21% of survey respondents.

When asked the reasons they did not seek care when it was last needed, 58% reported they did not have the money and 26% said they did not know where to go.

Participants in the focus group described a great need for a “middle ground between emergency care and waiting”. The need for information and triage care recommendations was a resonant theme.

Informational hubs online were suggested, however a nurse care line to assist for minor health issues was a related request.

When it comes to workshops or classes, most participants prefer in-person to online learning, but the survey revealed a gap between those who want in-person classes and the best practice understanding that training is for the owner, not the pet.

Participant Representation

Key Stakeholder Interviewees

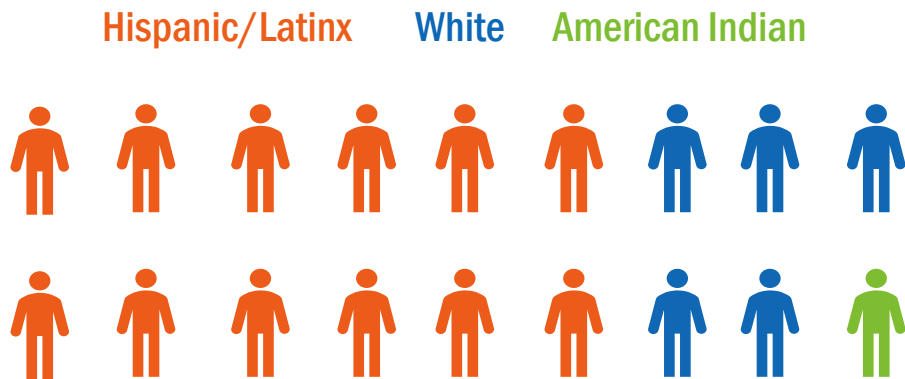
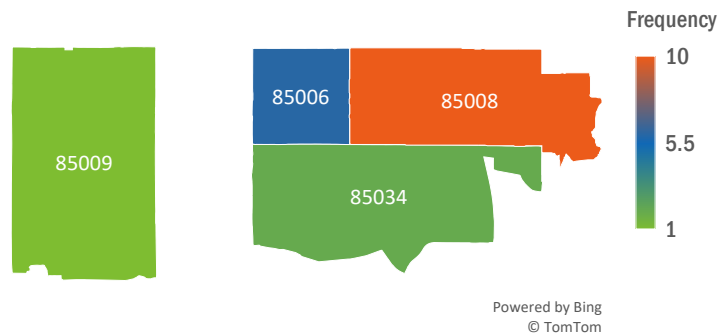


One hundred percent of interviewees were pet owners who lived in the project’s target zip codes. Nine out of ten were female, and nine out of ten self-identified as Hispanic or Latinx.

Focus Group Participants

Origin of Participants by zip code

Out of the focus group participants who elected to complete the demographic survey, 76% shared that they experience economic hardship at least sometimes. This may include the limited ability to pay rent or mortgage, buy food, clothing, or pay for medical care. Eight focus group participants only spoke Spanish, eight only spoke English, and two community focus group participants were bilingual in English and Spanish.



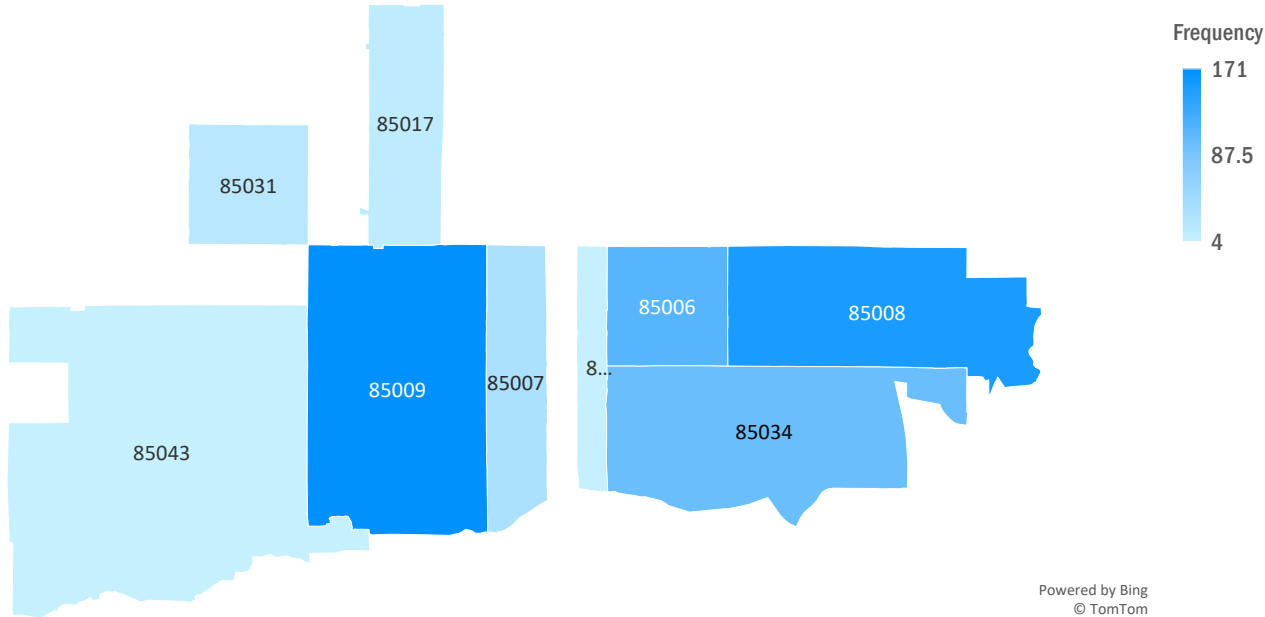
Community Survey Participants

There were 614 respondents to the community survey. Of this group, 73% of Hispanic or Latinx (48% first generation or immigrant, 33% second generation, and 19% third generation with grandparents in the United States or longer). Nearly three quarters of respondents were female. Half of respondents had no children in the home, and half reported there were four or more persons living in the home. Half of Central City survey respondents owned their home, and half rented. The majority earned less than \$50,000 annually. (There are overlaps between these groups.)

Four out of five were dog owners. Over two thirds of survey respondents got their animal from a family member or friend, or picked up a stray, and thus did not pay or invest money to purchase or adopt their animal. Nine out of ten survey respondents consider their pet to be a member of the family.

When asked what could help pet owners keep pets when faced with surrender, the most commonly reported needs were *financial support for vet care, behavioral support for toileting, biting, and scratching, and financial support for food and supplies.*

Origin of Participants by zip code



References

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