

Asilomar Accords vs. U.S. No Kill Declaration

Two competing visions for the future of animal sheltering in the United States have been put forth. Which one provides a roadmap for lifesaving? We looked at each of them side-by-side.

Asilomar Accords vs. No Kill Declaration

Should shelters try to save feral cats?	Feral cats are considered "unhealthy" and "untreatable." Feral cats share the same category for hopelessly ill or irremediably suffering pets. And the same fate—death.	Yes. Feral cats have a right to their lives and their habitats. Shelters must implement Trap-Neuter-Return for feral cats.
What should we do about animal control laws that hurt animals?	Shelters and communities can limit the number of animals a person can own, can require that cats be licensed under threat of impoundment and killing, can make it illegal to feed stray animals, and can pass laws making TNR illegal.	Shelters and communities should seek the repeal of unenforceable and counter-productive animal control ordinances such as cat licensing and leash laws, pet limit laws, bans on feeding stray animals, and bans on specific breeds.
Should breed bans be allowed?	Shelters and communities can continue to ban pit bulls and other breeds so that they are killed even if they are healthy and friendly.	No. Every animal in a shelter should receive individual consideration. If the animal is truly vicious, they can be killed. But friendly dogs should be made available for adoption regardless of their breed.
Should shelters work with rescue groups to place animals they would otherwise kill?	Shelters can kill animals rather than send them to rescue groups.	Yes. Public shelters should work with humane animal adoption organizations to the fullest extent to promote the adoption of animals and to reduce the rate of killing; In addition, animal protection groups, rescue groups, and No Kill shelters have a right to take into their custody animals who would otherwise be killed by animal shelters.
Should shelters place neonatal, underaged, sick or injured animals into foster care where they can receive care and recover?	Shelters can continue to kill animals even when placing them into foster care will save them.	Shelters must implement a foster care network for underaged, traumatized, sick, injured, or other animals needing refuge before any sheltered animal is killed, unless the prognosis for rehabilitation of that individual animal is poor or grave.
Should we try to achieve No Kill?	No Kill is inflammatory and misleading.	Yes.
Should shelters be honest and forthright about their policies and practices?	Only limited statistics must be provided to the public.	Yes. Taxpayers and community members have a right to full and complete disclosure about how animal shelters operate.

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Should shelters be open on weekends when working people can adopt?	Shelters do not need to be open on weekends.	Yes. Shelters should open to the public during hours that permit working people to reclaim or adopt animals during nonworking hours.
Do shelters have to spay/neuter animals before adoption?	The decision should be made by each shelter and community.	Shelters and other government agencies should promote spay/neuter programs and mandate that animals be spayed or neutered before adoption.
Should volunteers be allowed to help socialize shelter animals, foster animals, and help with adoptions and special events?	Shelters do not have to implement volunteer programs.	Yes. Shelters and other government agencies should implement volunteer programs to socialize animals, promote adoptions, and help in the operations of the shelter.
Do shelters have to try to save animals before killing them?	No.	Yes. Shelters should provide documentation before any animal is killed that all efforts to save the animal have been considered, including medical and behavioral rehabilitation, foster care, rescue groups, neuter and release, and adoption.
Can shelters call shy or scared animals "unadoptable" and kill them?	Yes.	No. Shelters should end the use of temperament testing that results in killing animals who are not truly vicious (e.g., shy/timid cats and frightened dogs) but who can be placed in homes, or are feral cats who can be returned or released.

If you were a homeless dog or cat, would you rather enter a shelter that follows the Asilomar Accords? Or one that embraces the U.S. No Kill Declaration? We think these questions answer themselves.

