

Population Rounds SOP - SAMPLE

Purpose

- Meet the physical and behavioral needs for all animals in care
- Minimize length of stay
- Ensure timely communication between teams

Definitions

- **Inventory** = a list of animals in care by location, including foster care
- **Length of stay (LOS)** = the time between intake and outcome for an animal
- **Pathway plan** = identified steps required to achieve the anticipated outcome for an animal
- **Capacity** = the program's ability to effectively and efficiently meet the physical and behavioral needs of the population; includes things such as physical enclosures, personnel time, and placement options.

Participants

- The rounds team is a small, functional group to provide a purposeful discussion of each animal and the population.
- The ideal group is 2-6 people in size.
- Participants represent different perspectives in planning for each animal.
- Participants create and follow up on action plans developed during rounds.

The team should include:

- Operations
- Medical
- Behavior
- Placement/Adoptions

One participant may represent multiple perspectives (e.g., be both a shelter manager and foster coordinator). Each rounds group should also have a designated leader and a designated scribe (note taker).

Preparation

All participants should come prepared with:

- The animal inventory report
- Relevant updates since the last rounds session
- Knowledge of the status, updates, and next steps for animals awaiting pathway advances
- Questions or decisions for brief discussion

Procedure

- **Frequency:** Rounds should occur regularly to ensure minimal delays in pathway advancement
 - Ideally, once daily. In longer-stay populations, may be less frequent.
 - Monitor for inefficiencies in animal flow and increase rounds if needed.
- **Location**
 - Physical rounding: travel through the shelter, discuss each animal at its enclosure
 - Virtual rounding: discussion happens virtually but is still informed by onsite animal observations
- **Process:** follow the same order and process each time to enhance consistency and efficiency
 - Discuss each animal in sequence – litters or groups of animals from a single household can be grouped for efficiency if there are no individual factors that warrant discussion
 - Discuss animals available for placement (if applicable) first for efficiency
 - For each animal review/discuss the following:

“Who are you?”	<p>All animals: Intake date and (if applicable) date made available for placement (can be substituted with length of stay); current stage/status</p> <p>New intakes or animals that rounds participants are unfamiliar with: intake source, basic animal information (age, gender, breed), and a brief history</p>
“How are you?”	<p>Current conditions</p> <p>Updates or new concerns</p> <p>Ensure the animal is in the appropriate location in the shelter based on current status and/or needs</p>
“What’s the plan?”	<p>Verify the designated pathway is still appropriate</p>
“What do we need to do today?”	<p>Next steps are clearly identified to address any immediate needs for housing, medical, and/or behavioral care and in consideration of minimizing LOS</p>

- **Guiding Principles**
 - Balance efficiency with facilitating robust conversation when needed
 - Remain focused on the animal at hand
 - Expedite discussion of animals with clear pathways/next steps
 - Avoid addressing concerns in the moment except in emergencies (e.g., a severely ill animal is identified that needs immediate action to prevent exposure to other animals or to relieve suffering)
 - Pause to ensure thoughtful conversation for animals with complex pathway decision

- **Rounds Wrap-Up**

- Pause to discuss “How are you?” and “What do you need from us today?” for the population with consideration of current or anticipated capacity concerns
- Set priorities
- Each rounds member should leave with clear action items
- Rounds notes and action items should be recorded during each session and shared with team members (see Appendix 1 for a sample form)
- Task completion should be documented and shared at rounds the next day

Appendix 1: Sample Population Rounds Notes Template

Animal Name/ID	Location	Intake Date	Current Stage/Status	Pathway	Notes/Updates	Action Items	Assigned To