

# Fast track/slow track flow-through planning

Identifying your "fast track" animals and knowing how to create a pathway to their speedy adoption is a quick and easy way to increase your organization's capacity to save lives. This information sheet will show you how.

Fast tracking has benefits for all shelter animals and helps maximize life-saving capacity. Minimizing the average length of stay (LOS) reduces the daily in-shelter population, allowing more resources (e.g. time, housing space, and attention) to be available for each animal present. In shelters that control or limit intake, more "fast track" animals may be admitted and adopted, as "fast track" animals leave more quickly.

Consider two largely separate groups for each species when adoption flow through plans are made for cats and dogs, those on the "adoption fast track" and those on the "slow track". This will permit a primary focus on quick turnaround time and infectious disease control for fast track animals, who are generally younger and more susceptible, and a focus on welfare and enrichment for those in the slow track.

Based on the experience of each organization, animals who are most likely to be rapidly adopted (e.g. kittens, puppies, and friendly small to medium sized dogs) should be assigned to the fast track. Animals that may be slower to place due to behavior, age, or physical issues may be assigned directly to the slow track. Animals that do not get adopted out of the fast track within 2-3 weeks should be reassigned to the slow track.

"Fast track" and "slow track" should be considered as two separate populations. Adoption driven capacity (ADC) can be estimated for both by setting targets for LOS and using historical numbers of adoptions in each category. Learn more about ADC on our information sheet [Adoption Driven Capacity: your shelter's key to saving lives and providing great care](#).

Slow track housing should be designed to accommodate longer stays with good welfare. Learn more about housing on our information sheet [Facility Design and Animal Housing](#).

## "Fast Track" Recommendations

- Implement a "Fast Track" for a **single** group of animals as a first step

- Fast tracking puppies and kittens has the added benefit of protecting them for disease exposure
- Reserve some of the cages in adoptable sections of the shelter for “Fast Track” animals
- Fast track all apparently healthy animals directly from intake to adoption
- Ideally, fast track numbers are estimated by evaluating historical monthly intake numbers for fast track animals
- Monitor the average length of stay (LOS) for animals in the fast track
- If LOS to adoption for the “fast track” is prolonged beyond the target LOS (no longer than 10 -14 days), it is likely too many animals have been made available at one time
- Determine the historical number of fast track animal adoptions vs. other adoptions (if possible) adoptions in order to calculate ADC for each track. Otherwise, simply estimate a percentage, watch what happens and adjust numbers if needed.
- Implement practices to minimize LOS for slow track animals as well
- Once the “fast track” has been established and runs smoothly for the first group, consider implementing a “fast track” for a second group as a next step
- Monitor adoption numbers and LOS to adoption by group over time

To learn about how two shelters implemented successful fast track programs to decrease LOS, reduce crowding and increase adoptions watch the [Fast Tracking to Save Lives webinar](#) presented by the ASPCA.