



## Basic Data Matrix – Introduction

The National Federation of Humane Societies (NFHS) is very excited to share with the animal sheltering community a **Basic Data Matrix**, which has received support and input from many national organizations including the NFHS, the ASPCA, PetSmart Charities, the HSUS, AHA, Maddie's Fund, SAWA and others including the members of the National Federation and the Asilomar Accords working group. Members of the National Federation of Humane Societies have been working on the matrix for over a year with the goals of establishing a minimum data collection recommendation and to help increase the collection of data collaboratively. Ultimately, the NFHS hopes to create a tool from which local organizations can benchmark their productivity against other organizations in their state or region or nationally, of similar size or by organization type. The resulting Basic Data Matrix is therefore designed to both define the **least** amount of data an animal sheltering organization should collect, and to serve as a **common language** for data collection across a wide spectrum of agencies.

For those new to data collection or reporting, we hope this matrix defines a national guideline for the minimum data they should be collecting. When collected, this data will help an agency begin to understand the nature of their work from a qualitative perspective. An agency can then begin to identify those populations of animals served by their agency whose needs are being met, and those populations whose needs are not yet being met (who are therefore at risk). Of course there is much more data which can be collected, this matrix simply defines a minimum place to begin.

For those agencies who are experienced data collectors, we hope that the basic data matrix provides an opportunity to collaborate by gathering information beyond their agency at a community or regional level in an 'apples-to apples' manner. One key to compiling data from multiple organizations is to use a common language or format for that data compilation. We believe this basic data matrix and the associated definitions will help provide that necessary structure.

We recognize that we'll learn more about how the form works well, and where it doesn't work well, as it is used by shelters in the field. The National Federation welcomes feedback. If anyone has recommendations or questions about the form - please do share your thoughts with Steve Putnam, CEO of the National Federation of Humane Societies at [sputnam@humanefederation.org](mailto:sputnam@humanefederation.org) or (703) 242-3675.

Thank you!