

How the Humane Society of the United States helps local pet shelters and rescue groups

The Humane Society of the United States was founded to tackle animal welfare challenges beyond the reach of local organizations and to supplement the essential work of animal shelters and rescues by addressing the root causes of animal cruelty, advocating for stronger laws to ensure the protection of all animals. We celebrate the lifesaving work of groups at the local level and support their critical efforts in many ways.

- We host **Animal Care Expo**, the preeminent annual conference and trade show for animal sheltering and rescue professionals and volunteers. Expo features professional development sessions led by experts in the field, who provide skills and progressive strategies that can be applied by local organizations to benefit their communities globally. Learn more and register at humanepro.org/expo.
- We produce **HumanePro**, a free comprehensive online resource for animal shelter and rescue staff, advocates and volunteers. HumanePro provides stories, best practices, information on funding and grants, trainings, toolkits and how-to guides. These resources cover all aspects of shelter and rescue operations, including shelter design, disease control, shelter medicine, community programming, fundraising and adoption promotions, as well as animal welfare news, events, blogs and career advancement opportunities. Visit humanepro.org.
- One of our [big fights](#) is **stopping puppy mills**, dedicated to ending the cruel treatment of dogs in mass breeding operations. The campaign helps shelters directly impacted by puppy mills in their communities by working with our Investigations department on undercover projects, as well as gathering complaints about puppy mills and sick puppies and directing them to the correct agencies in coordination with our [Animal Rescue and Response team](#), which provides expert advice and assistance to local agencies on closing down puppy mills. The Stop Puppy Mills team also advocates for better public policies to prevent puppy mills and improve standards of care for animals being bred for profit, and conducts public awareness campaigns to encourage the community to consider [pet adoption](#) as their first option when choosing a dog. The team also manages the [Puppy-Friendly Pet Stores](#) program, which has more than 3,100 participating stores that have pledged to help shelter and rescue pets get adopted in their communities rather than offering commercially-raised puppies for sale. The program has resulted new homes for more than 35,000 shelter pets through pet store adoptions and events. The campaign's educator toolkit, [From Nose to Tail](#), is a free program for educators of elementary students and teaches the values of humane pet care and humane pet acquisition, with an emphasis on shelter adoption. Download [An Advocate's Guide to Stopping Puppy Mills](#) and [Puppy Mills and the Animal Welfare Act](#), and learn more at humanesociety.org/stoppupmills.
- We **advocate for laws and policies that promote the human-animal bond** and keeping pets and families together, many of which directly support the efforts of the entire sheltering and rescue field. We have developed various toolkits to help reform local animal ordinances, including prohibiting policies that unfairly target certain breeds of dogs and promoting policies for affordable and accessible pet friendly housing—a major driver of shelter surrenders. We also tackle issues at the state level, including improving access to veterinary and behavioral care for pets, protecting lifesaving transport programs and ending the use of gas chambers for euthanasia. Download



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[Repealing Breed-Specific Legislation](#), our [Municipal Pet Policy Toolkit](#) and access the [Eviction Response Toolkit](#). Learn more at humanepro.org/policies.

- The Humane Society of the United States partners with the Ad Council and Maddie's Fund on the **Shelter Pet Project**, the first and only national public service advertising campaign encouraging people to make pet adoption the first choice for people seeking to add a pet to their family. Research over a three-year period shows that this award-winning campaign helped to increase pet adoptions at shelters and rescues by more than 24%. Visit theshelterpetproject.org.
- Our **Shelter and Rescue Partner program** is a national network of more than 380 shelters and rescues committed to saving animals from abuse, assisting overwhelmed shelters and collaborating to drive advancements in the animal welfare field. Through the **Shelter Ally Project**, we work with our shelter and rescue partners to bring resources and expertise to organizations that are interested in learning new strategies by facilitating shelter-to-shelter relationships and sharing best practices and innovative program ideas. Our long-term approach seeks to build local capacity through effective policies and programs that will, over time, reduce the number of animals flowing into animal shelters and keep more pets in their homes. Learn more at humanesociety.org/resources/shelter-and-rescue-partners and humanepro.org/shelter-ally-project.
- Our **Animal Rescue and Response** team provides on-the-scene support and expertise in the [rescue and care](#) of animals during [natural disasters](#) and large-scale situations of [cruelty and neglect](#), such as [animal fighting](#) and [puppy mill](#) cases. We also offer training, expert guidance and much needed resources to law enforcement and animal shelters throughout the country to assist with the investigation and prosecution of all animal crimes. In addition, we work with a network of [Shelter and Rescue Partners](#) across the country to ensure there is a safe place for the animal victims of these crises to recover. Learn more at humanesociety.org/animal-rescue-team.
- Through tailored, hands-on and virtual **trainings**, we engage and empower shelter and rescue personnel—in addition to law enforcement officers, wildlife rehabilitators, veterinarians and clinic staff, government entities and the public—by providing humane resources, skills, techniques and solutions to improve the quality of life of all animals. Visit our **Law Enforcement Training Center** at humanepro.org/topics/humane-state-trainings.
- Our free [Adopters Welcome manual](#) helps shelters and rescues build stronger relationships with their communities by removing adoption barriers and becoming more inclusive of all community members. The manual includes research, strategies and practical tools for immediate implementation of this conversation-based adoption program.
- Our [Pets for Life](#) program is guided by the philosophy that a deep connection with pets transcends socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity and geography, and that no one should be denied the opportunity to experience the benefits, joy and comfort that come from the human-animal bond. Through door-to-door community outreach, Pets for Life provides veterinary care, supplies, services and information at no cost to pet owners, building trust, positive relationships and community partnerships. In pursuit of its goal to make companion animal welfare more just, inclusive and fair, Pets for Life delivers in-depth guidance and support to local organizations throughout the U.S. and Canada and to the veterinary profession, ensuring all have the necessary tools and knowledge to implement and sustain community outreach programming. In addition, Pets for Life encourages agencies tasked with enforcement of animal welfare ordinances and statutes to take a less punitive and more support-based approach, and for animal welfare organizations to enact policies that are equitable for all pet owners. View Pets for Life mentorship cities at humanepro.org/pets-for-life/where, and download Pets for Life's free tools and guides at humanepro.org/pets-for-life/tools-and-guides.



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- Cats continue to be a challenge for shelters across the country. Our [Managing Community Cats: A Guide for Municipal Leaders](#) and award-winning [Return-to-Field Handbook](#) are just two of the resources we have created to help shelters and the communities they serve to humanely reduce the unowned cat population. We work with the shelter and rescue community to improve laws for cats and to allow for lifesaving strategies such as trap-neuter-return best practices by local organizations. Rethinking the Cat symposia and a collection of webinars equip animal sheltering professionals and volunteers with tools and tactics to provide more life-saving opportunities for cats in their care. The HSUS is also a founding coalition member of the [DC Cat Count](#), a research initiative which develops data-driven tools to enable shelters to increase their impact and effectiveness.
- Advising pet owners on cat behavior issues can mean the difference between a cat keeping or losing their home. Our [Guide to Cat Behavior Counseling](#) was developed to help sheltering professionals learn how to appropriately advise pet owners on cat behavior issues to keep them in their existing homes.

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