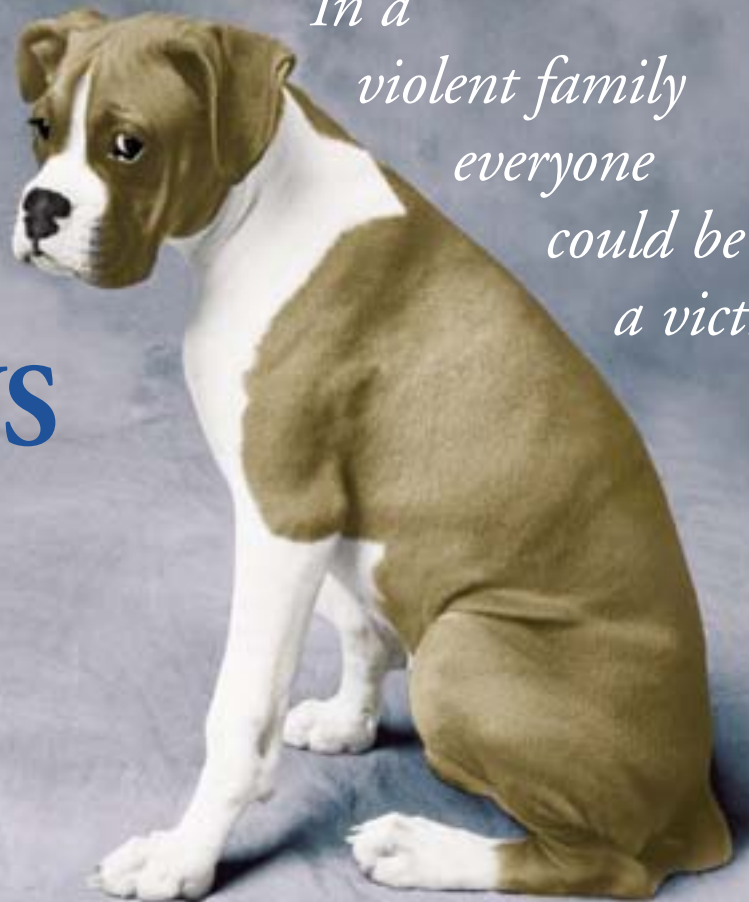


*Starting a*  
**SAFE HAVENS**  
*for* **ANIMALS™**  
**PROGRAM**

*In a  
violent family  
everyone  
could be  
a victim*





# *Starting a Safe Havens for Animals Program*

## **Introduction**

**P**ETS ARE PART OF THE FAMILY IN MOST American households. But in homes where there's violence, pets are often threatened or injured by the violent partner as a way to intimidate or control other family members. In surveys of women entering domestic violence shelters, nearly half report that their pets had been threatened, injured, or killed by their partners. And others report that they delayed leaving their homes because they feared for their pets' safety.

In a recent sample of some of the largest domestic violence shelters in the country, The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) found that 91 percent of adult victims and 73 percent of children describe incidents of companion animal abuse when they enter shelters. But only 18 percent of the shelters surveyed routinely ask about pets when a victim comes to them for services. This is consistent with a 1997 survey that showed that domestic violence advocates commonly heard accounts of animal abuse, yet few domestic violence shelters asked about animal cruelty during intake interviews. While domestic violence advocates recognize the connection between animal cruelty and family violence, they need more resources to assist victims in safety planning for companion animals. Fortunately, Safe Havens for Animals™ programs can help.



## What Is a Safe Havens for Animals Program?

Most domestic violence shelters can't accept pets because of health regulations, space limitations, additional costs, and potential liabilities. However, animal shelters, animal care and control agencies, veterinary clinics, and private boarding kennels have begun partnering with domestic violence shelters to provide temporary housing for victims' pets. These programs may be known by a variety of names—such as Safe Haven, Safe Pet, or Animal Safehouse programs, among others—but they all offer a life-saving alternative for family violence victims and their companion animals. Such programs can also provide valuable information for victims, including safety

planning advice, as well as educate other human service agencies—such as police departments and social services agencies—about the animal cruelty/family violence connection and the importance of working with human victims of violence to prevent animal cruelty. The HSUS developed these guidelines and model forms to assist animal care professionals; domestic violence shelters; veterinary clinics, schools, and associations; and other community organizations establish Safe Havens for Animals programs.

## Understanding the Animal Cruelty/Family Violence Connection

Domestic abuse can take many forms. According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV), “it may include emotional abuse, economic abuse, sexual abuse, using children to manipulate a spouse's emotions, threats, using male privilege, intimidation, isolation, and a variety of other behaviors used to maintain fear, intimidation, and power.” Family violence is often associated with the abuse of family pets, as well.

Domestic violence can also foster animal cruelty in other ways. Several studies indicate that about a third of children who experience family violence in pet-owning homes will act out against pets in the home or elsewhere. Often animal shelter humane educators and social services workers have the opportunity to work with these children to foster empathy and compassion and teach skills that will help them and protect their pets.

It's important for all agencies involved in a Safe Havens for Animals program to understand the dynamics of family violence

and be sensitive to the needs of victims. Staff members and foster care volunteers should be trained on the animal cruelty/family violence connection. The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) First Strike® campaign offers brochures, fact sheets, and other training materials, and the partnering domestic violence agency may offer training and guidance, too.

## Determining the Need

Your first step in establishing a Safe Havens for Animals program should be to determine the need in your community. If there's already a local Safe Havens for Animals program, consider partnering with the agency in charge. If your community doesn't have an established program, review your agency's ability to take on such a project by examining its mission and scope, funding sources, current staff, volunteer commitment and availability, knowledge of domestic violence issues, and sensitivities to the needs of victims. Determine your agency's ability to make a long-term commitment to the project and consider how it fits the agency's strategic plan and long-term goals. It's also crucial to secure the support of your agency's board of directors or governing body. Take the following steps to prepare.

- ■ ■
- Gather local information on the prevalence of animal cruelty in the context of family violence (see the sample animal abuse survey on page 19\*)
- Share materials on the connection between animal cruelty and family violence with coworkers and the governing body (visit [www.hsus.org/firststrike](http://www.hsus.org/firststrike), call 1-888-213-0956, or e-mail [firststrike@hsus.org](mailto:firststrike@hsus.org) for these materials)
- Conduct an in-service training on the animal cruelty/family violence connection
- ■ ■

## Collaborating

Once your agency has committed to starting a Safe Havens for Animals program, the next step is collaborating with other agencies that deal with violence issues in your community, including animal care and control agencies; animal shelters; domestic violence shelters; state and local law enforcement agencies; family crisis centers; social services agencies; veterinary clinics, schools, and associations; and community programs or intervention groups. Combining



resources and expertise with other organizations will make the program more effective, and you should invite every animal protection and domestic violence organization in your community to join the effort. Of course, interested agencies should also review their own strategic plans and long-term goals before committing to the project.

For animal care professionals, the local domestic violence shelter will be a valuable source of information for learning about the needs of family violence victims. And family violence advocates will learn about animal organizations' programs, foster care volunteer base, and ability to house victims' animals. Begin by asking potential domestic violence agency collaborators the following questions.

■ ■ ■

- Do your standardized intake forms include questions about pets and pet abuse?
- Do clients ever mention the need for temporary shelter for their pets?
- Do you have any provisions for boarding your clients' pets, such as a relationship with an animal shelter, veterinarian, boarding kennel, staff members, or volunteers?
- Would you be interested in forming a collaborative partnership with our agency to create a temporary shelter program for your clients' animals?

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Similarly, family violence advocates should ask potential animal care agency collaborators the following questions.

■ ■ ■

- Do you currently offer temporary sheltering for owned animals whose owners are experiencing a crisis like family violence? How and where?
- Do you have an active network of foster care volunteers?
- Would you be interested in forming a collaborative partnership with our agency to create a temporary shelter program for our clients' animals?

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Once a collaborative partnership is initiated, begin developing policies and standard operating procedures cooperatively. Put them in writing for each agency's attorneys to review. It's also a good idea to select a coordinator who will be responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of the program. You'll find model forms at the end of this booklet to adapt as appropriate.\*

Also consider establishing an advisory board as you develop a Safe Havens for Animals program. Other community agencies that can serve as partners or advisors include family violence

coordinating councils, community mental health agencies, state attorney's offices, child or adult protective services agencies, police or sheriff's departments, state humane associations, veterinary associations, and crime prevention associations.

## Defining Parameters

As the Safe Havens for Animals program develops, all parties will need to agree on the geographic area it will serve. Many existing programs limit their services to citizens who live in a particular county or municipality or who are entering the partnering domestic violence shelter. But if your community is in a rural or remote area, consider extending assistance to clients in a broader region. In some places, organizations from neighboring areas pool their resources to provide a network of Safe Havens for Animals serving a larger area. This increases the number of facilities available to serve victims while also providing increased security by allowing animals to be placed in facilities outside the area where the threat of violence originated.



In most cases, the domestic violence shelter is the primary referring agency for animals who require temporary foster care, and most Safe Havens for Animals programs require the victim to

contact the violence shelter first. Accepting referrals only from partnering agencies is a good practice for several reasons. First, it's important for a victim to speak with a professional who's knowledgeable about family violence and can provide essential services. Second, by working directly with a referring agency, the program coordinator can receive feedback on victims' progress in finding permanent and safe housing for themselves and their animals. Third, it helps ensure that the program is extending its services to people with a legitimate need for temporarily housing their pets. But also consider accepting referrals from animal shelters, police departments, family services agencies, transitional housing agencies, homeless shelters, and community mental health centers.

Before accepting animals into the program, discuss victims' resources for placing their animals in a safe home on their own and for meeting the short- and long-term needs of the pets. They may have alternatives (friends, family, or boarding facilities) for safely housing their pets without using limited shelter or foster care resources. Victims may also need to assess their ability to care for a pet and consider allowing the animal to be placed in a permanent new home.

\*The HSUS provides these forms as samples only, and they should be reviewed by collaborating agencies' attorneys before use.

## Confidentiality

Maintaining confidentiality is essential when working with family violence victims. If information about victims or their pets is shared with many people, the safety of all parties is jeopardized. Only the caseworker who made the referral, the coordinator of the Safe Havens for Animals program, and their respective supervisors should have access to records about victims and their pets. All paperwork and case files should be kept in a securely locked filing cabinet or desk. And any computer files on the people or animals in the program should be password-protected or encrypted to prevent unauthorized access. To help ensure safety, victims and foster caregivers shouldn't be given each other's names or contact information.

If the program coordinator has direct contact with the victim, every effort should be made to complete the assessment, paperwork, and animal transfer in a private location, such as an office or designated room at the domestic violence center or animal shelter. These precautions provide a safeguard for the victim, the pet, and other personnel.

## Organizing the Program

### Types of Animals

Safe Havens for Animals programs should be prepared to provide temporary shelter for common species of companion animals like dogs and cats. But special consideration must be given to aggressive, sick, aged, and exotic animals. They can pose challenges, and animal shelters and veterinary clinics may not be able to accommodate them. Consider the sheltering organizations' staff training and experience in handling such animals; liability issues; and the facility's physical architecture or ability to separate hostile and unhealthy animals from others before accepting them into the program. If the program will serve a rural area, explore resources for providing care for larger animals such as horses and livestock and try to recruit foster care providers who are able and willing to shelter such animals.

If the types of animals a program can handle are limited, partnering agencies can still refer victims to other organizations that may be able to help, such as farm animal sanctuaries, wildlife rehabilitation centers, or rescue groups. These organizations may also have an interest in becoming program partners, so include them in the planning process. When the sheltering agency is unable to accept aggressive animals,



the program coordinator should explore other safe pet housing options with victims. One alternative is placing the pet with a friend or family member who is familiar with the animal's behavior (and with whom the animal has already interacted). The program coordinator should be prepared to discuss euthanasia if an animal is suffering or if it would be inhumane to subject the animal to a stressful situation.

### Housing

There are several options for temporarily housing pets from family violence situations—housing in a shelter, placement in a foster home, boarding at a veterinary clinic or private kennel, or a combination of these. But one or more of these options may not be logistically feasible for the agency coordinating the temporary placement. As the program develops, the partnering agencies should review the housing choices to determine which ones provide the greatest safety, security, accountability, and control. For example, the Humane Society of Southern Arizona's Safe Haven Animal Foster Care Program only boards animals at a private kennel. Others, like the Animal Safehouse Program at Rancho Coastal Humane Society, use kennel space at a shelter and foster homes. If your program is in a rural or remote area, the program coordinator should try to shelter animals with foster caregivers in a different area or at a veterinary clinic or private kennel.

### Availability

Often family violence victims aren't able to escape from their abusers during the day and may need to leave in the middle of the night or on a weekend. Safe Havens for Animals programs should be available to accept animals at any time. Establish a communications system so that someone is on call after business hours. For example, some programs work with animal shelters or animal care and control agencies that are staffed 24 hours a day to provide after-hours transportation. If this isn't feasible, the domestic violence shelter should make temporary provisions for the animals until the program coordinator or other designated staff can get them in the morning. This will involve keeping pet food, carriers, leashes, and bedding at the domestic violence shelter and designating a separate room where animals can stay.

### Foster Care Screening

The HSUS Animal Sheltering Issues library at [www.AnimalSheltering.org](http://www.AnimalSheltering.org) offers detailed information and materials on creating a foster care program and foster volunteer network. Some tips on recruiting and working with foster caregivers in a Safe Havens for Animals program follow.



- Require foster care volunteers to go through the animal protection organization's general volunteer program training

- Purchase insurance to cover any possible liabilities
- Establish an application and screening process
- Conduct a home visit and criminal background check
- Make an unannounced home visit
- Check references, including applicants' veterinarians
- Provide training on proper animal caretaking procedures and what to do in emergencies
- Require applicants to attend a family violence training session
- Make sure foster caregivers understand the fostering commitment and that they can't leave the pet with anyone else; if there's an emergency or planned vacation, the foster caregiver must work with the program coordinator to transfer the animal to another approved foster home
- Emphasize that foster caregivers must keep information about pets confidential
- Obtain signed release from liability forms (see the sample form on pages 16–17\*)
- Never disclose the identity of the victim to the foster caregiver and vice versa
- Prepare foster caregivers for all possible outcomes, including the possibility that the pet may go back to the violent home

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## Sheltering Time Frames

Some victims of family violence will stay at a shelter for several weeks or even months. Ideally, a Safe Havens for Animals program should offer its services during the length of time that the victim is staying at the shelter and in transitional housing. But given the costs of caring for animals and space limitations at animal shelters, it's important to determine a reasonable maximum length of time the animals will be housed and state this clearly in the owner agreement contract. Most programs offer services for 14–30 days. The agencies involved should also agree on contingency plans for when victims don't reclaim their animals within the stated time frame. Having the victims sign a contract extension agreement provides a written way to extend services (see the sample form on page 18\*).

## Contact with the Victim

Communicating regularly (at least once a week) with the victim or the caseworker is essential to assessing the victim's current status and ability to reclaim the pet. The owner information

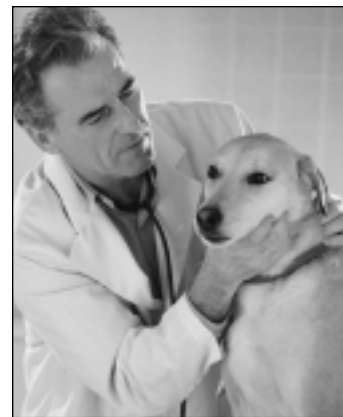
form that the victim completes during intake should include contact information (see the sample form on pages 12–13\*).

## Visitation with the Animal

Allowing victims and their children the opportunity to visit their pets may seem like a good idea because of their emotional attachment, but such visits can be stressful to the animals and involve logistic problems and threaten the safety of everyone. Some programs that allow visits arrange for them to take place at a location separate from the shelter and without the foster care provider. Agencies providing shelter for the animals need to determine if they're able to provide this additional service. Alternatives include providing families with weekly updates or pictures of the pets.

## Services to Be Provided

Aside from basic animal care, the program coordinator needs to consider what medical services the program will provide to animals in its custody. If the pets will be kept at an animal shelter or foster caregiver's home, the animal shelter should treat the cases like any other intakes entering the facility. It's a good idea to have a licensed veterinarian examine animals upon intake. Additional services may include bathing; flea dipping; vaccinating; spaying/neutering; behavior evaluation; testing for heartworm, feline immunodeficiency virus, and other diseases; and emergency medical care.



## Relinquishment

Although few victims fail to reclaim their pets, you should develop a policy to deal with these cases. Inform victims of such policies during the intake process, and ask them to sign a written agreement that clearly outlines what the sheltering agency may do—adoption or euthanasia—if the pet isn't reclaimed. While relinquishing a pet is sad, it may be the best solution if the victim isn't able to provide adequate care for the animal or if the victim is relocating to housing that doesn't accept pets. The HSUS's *Making the Connection: Protecting Your Pet from Domestic Violence* brochure provides guidance to victims who have companion animals and includes a discussion of relinquishment options.



\*The HSUS provides these forms as samples only, and they should be reviewed by collaborating agencies' attorneys before use.



## Returning Animals

Develop a written procedure on how you will return animals once the temporary shelter period is over. Options include having the owner reclaim the pet at the shelter or reuniting the pet with the owner at the referral agency or another location. During

the return, the program coordinator should consider sharing a community resources packet with the owner, which may include animal care tips, important phone numbers, family violence assistance programs, and pet-friendly rental housing listings. This information can be helpful as a family violence victim transitions to a new home.

Unfortunately, some victims may decide to reclaim their pets and return to the abusive situation. This can be very frustrating because they're putting themselves and their pets in danger. It can also be hard for a foster caregiver to accept that a pet is going back to a potentially harmful situation. But it's important for shelter personnel and foster caregivers to understand that leaving a family violence situation can be a gradual process and victims may leave and return several times before severing ties with the abuser for good. If this occurs, a domestic violence advocate or program coordinator should educate the victim about the dangers of returning and affirm the program's commitment to providing future help. Ultimately, the program will have to allow the victim to reclaim the pet and return to the abuser if the victim so chooses.

## Animal Care Procedures

The HSUS has a wealth of information and materials to help shelter staff and volunteers evaluate the health of cats, dogs, and other companion animals. Visit [www.AnimalSheltering.org](http://www.AnimalSheltering.org) to learn more. It should be a standard operating procedure to have a licensed veterinarian examine each animal during intake and fully document what is found. The results should be provided to the owners to ensure they're aware of any health concerns and don't hold the shelter or foster caregiver liable in the future. If the pet is known or suspected to have been a victim of abuse, the animal should have an x-ray series to reveal recent or healed fractures and internal injuries in addition to a complete veterinary examination.

Animals staying at a partnering animal shelter under a Safe Havens for Animals program should be housed apart from other shelter animals to prevent them from contracting illnesses and to make them inaccessible to abusive partners and the general public. Staff members must understand that these animals aren't the shelter's property and that there are potential liabilities if the animal is injured, adopted out, or euthanized. Limiting the number of staff caring for the animals will help keep the

situation consistent and safe. The agency responsible for sheltering the animals also should issue temporary identification tags with a tracking number for each animal, but the tags shouldn't include any information about the owners.

## Legal Issues

Most Safe Havens for Animals programs accept victims' claims that they're the legal owners of the animals to be protected, but victims should be encouraged to provide as much evidence as possible, such as license forms, veterinary records, or anything that establishes a history of caring for the pets. When such evidence is missing, some programs will relicense the pet in the victim's name and the burden of proof is on the abuser to demonstrate rightful ownership. Abusers are unlikely to successfully reclaim animals, although they may attempt to do so as part of a general pattern of asserting power and control.

Even though a Safe Havens for Animals program is providing a valuable community service, the organizations involved aren't immune from legal responsibilities. As the program develops, the agency responsible for sheltering the pets must consult with its legal advisors about ownership and liability issues. Solid policies and procedures in daily operations must be established before undertaking the liabilities inherent in the program. If foster care volunteers will be involved, the agency should also consider obtaining an insurance policy that covers volunteers if it doesn't already have such a policy or its existing policy doesn't cover foster care.

## Publicizing the Program

Opinions vary about whether and how to promote Safe Havens for Animals programs to the public. While some program coordinators want to publicize their services as widely as possible, others prefer to limit information about the programs to their partnering agencies because of safety issues and concerns about being overwhelmed with requests for services. All partnering agencies should weigh in on these issues and create a plan to disseminate information about the program accordingly.

If the group isn't comfortable seeking media attention, there are still many ways to inform victims and related professionals about Safe Havens for Animals programs. Following is a list of such options.

- ■ ■
- Making presentations to local antiviolence coalitions
- Placing brochures with program partners and at libraries, churches, social services agencies, veterinary clinics, hospitals, and other community organizations
- Advertising in professional newsletters
- Giving wallet-sized cards to law enforcement officers to share with potential victims

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## Funding Sources

Most agencies that want to create a Safe Havens for Animals program have to consider financial resources and where to find funding. The animal sheltering agency can consider dedicating a portion of its existing budget to the program, or program costs can be divided between partnering agencies. Hosting fund-raising events for the program can provide additional funding, and there are many creative ways to do this. For example, an animal protection organization in Florida recently partnered with a local domestic violence shelter to sponsor a dog walk to raise funds for a Safe Havens for Animals program. Visit The HSUS Animal Sheltering Issues library at [www.AnimalSheltering.org](http://www.AnimalSheltering.org) to learn more about fund-raising



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for animal protection programs. And when foster care providers, veterinarians, or private kennel owners use their own funds to care for animals, the program coordinator should track the costs associated with each case. Their financial commitment may be considered an “in-kind” donation, which may be tax deductible.

Grants from foundations that have an interest in animal welfare, women’s issues, or crime prevention are another possible source of funding. Foundations are generally supportive of initiatives involving multiple-agency collaborations, so grant proposals should highlight all agencies that are committed to the effort. The Foundation Center ([www.fdncenter.org](http://www.fdncenter.org)) provides online guides to grant seeking and a large database of references on philanthropic sources, including family foundations and state and local funding directories.

### What about Costs?

If an animal shelter is the sheltering organization in a Safe Havens for Animals program, program requirements for animal care are probably already being provided for other animals in the shelter’s care, including veterinary exams, food, bedding, toys, and provisions for foster caregivers. Providing for program animals, then, shouldn’t be too much of a burden. The most significant costs specific to the program will generally be related to staff time in coordinating responses with other agencies, transporting animals to and from participating facilities,

and printing public awareness materials. Most programs don’t ask for compensation from victims, except when extensive veterinary care is required. This should be disclosed in the owner agreement so there’s no confusion about the owner’s financial responsibilities (see the sample form on pages 10–11\*). As the program develops, it’s essential for all agencies involved to discuss projected costs and budgets so no one agency is left with a financial burden.

## Evaluation

Once the Safe Havens for Animals program starts providing services, those involved should begin measuring its success. Each partnering group should evaluate the effects on their own resources. And it’s important to find out what family violence victims think of the program and how well it has met their needs. Their feedback will not only help improve services but also provide beneficial information to partnering agencies and funding sources (see the sample confidential evaluation form on page 20\*). To facilitate such an evaluation, track the number and types of pets temporarily sheltered, the duration of sheltering, the average cost per animal, and the disposition of each case.

## Conclusion

It’s important for all communities to have a Safe Havens for Animals program that provides temporary sheltering options for pets from violent homes. These programs not only assist in saving the lives of pets and family violence victims but also provide a valuable opportunity for animal protection agencies and human services agencies to combine resources to fulfill their missions. The programs have also been extremely successful in removing a barrier for many pet-owning family violence victims who refuse to leave their pets behind when they seek shelter. The HSUS maintains an online directory of Safe Havens for Animals programs at [www.hsus.org/firststrike](http://www.hsus.org/firststrike). Please call us toll free at 1-888-213-0956 or e-mail [firststrike@hsus.org](mailto:firststrike@hsus.org) if you would like to include your program in our online directory.

\*The HSUS provides these forms as samples only, and they should be reviewed by collaborating agencies’ attorneys before use.



# Safety Planning Information

## Protecting Your Pet from Domestic Violence: Some Frequently Asked Questions

### *If my partner harms an animal, will he or she hurt me?*

It's possible. If a person punches, kicks, throws, or hurts an animal in any way, it's a clear sign that he or she can be violent with humans, as well. If your partner has harmed or seriously threatened your pet, you may be in danger and should think about leaving.

### *How can I protect my pet?*

When there's violence in the home, it's very important to have an emergency plan for sheltering your pet, yourself, and other family members.

### *If I leave, who will take care of my pet?*

If possible, find a friend or family member to care for your pet. If this isn't an option, contact your local animal care and control agency, battered women's shelter, boarding kennel, or veterinarian. Ask if they know of a Safe Havens for Animals program that provides temporary housing for pets. If they don't, briefly explain your situation. If your pet is sheltered or placed in foster care by a humane society, or if a friend can care for your pet temporarily, you will have time to make long-term plans.

### *Will my pet be in any danger in a sheltering program or with friends?*

Although it's unlikely that a violent partner will come looking for your pet, it's wise to be cautious. Tell your pet's caretakers to keep the animal's location a secret from anyone who might give this information to your partner. You may be discouraged from visiting your pet in the temporary home to make sure you, your pet, and the temporary caretaker are safe.

### *Does my pet need to be current on all vaccinations?*

Yes. Almost all veterinary clinics, kennels, and animal shelters require animals to be vaccinated. If you don't have a copy

of your pet's vaccination record, he or she may need to be vaccinated again.

Keep vaccination and other veterinary records in a safe place so you can take them with you if you need to leave home in a hurry. If you don't have these records but know your pet is up to date on vaccinations, ask your veterinarian to send you a copy of the records.

If your pet is due for vaccinations, make an appointment with your veterinarian. Some local humane agencies provide low-cost or free vaccinations. Check your local *Yellow Pages* under "animal shelters" or "humane societies."

### *How can I prove that I own my pet?*

Your partner may attempt to get control of your pet in order to intimidate you. An animal license, proof of vaccinations, or veterinary receipts in your name will help prove you own your pet. You can also have your pet microchipped under your name.

### *What should I take when I move my pet to safety?*

If you're able to prepare for your pet's departure, try to have the following pet items in a safe place and out of your partner's reach.

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- Vaccination and medical records
- License that proves you own your animal
- Bowls, bedding, toys, grooming supplies, a favorite blanket, etc.
- Identification tag *without* your home address but *with* a phone number of a trusted friend or your veterinarian
- Dog leashes
- Cat carriers
- Medication, if any

- An information sheet on food and feeding schedules, medical conditions, medications and schedules, likes and dislikes, and any possible behavior problems to give to a temporary caretaker

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Note: If you leave your home, remove identification tags that identify the household you're leaving and attach tags with the alternative information (such as a trusted friend's or your veterinarian's phone number). Cat carriers are important, too. Unconfined cats can easily get scared and escape. If you don't have a carrier for your cat, a pillowcase can work in an emergency.

***What if I have to leave my pet behind?***

Ask a law enforcement agent to accompany you when you return home to reclaim your pet. Most communities recognize pets as property.

***Would my pet be better off if I put him or her up for adoption?***

Only you can make this decision. Giving up a beloved pet is sad, but it may be best for both of you. For one thing, many housing situations don't permit pets, or if they do, they may cost more. Realizing that your pet is safe in a new home can make your decision to leave a violent situation easier—emotionally and financially.

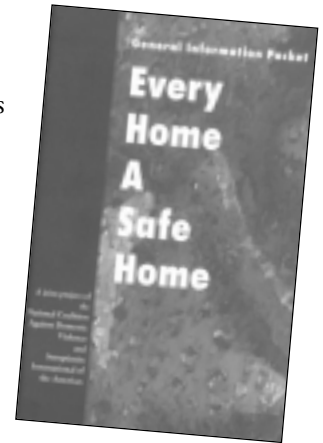
While animal shelters can't guarantee to place every animal, they do find permanent homes for many. It's easier for shelter staff to find a home for your pet if they know if the animal

is house trained, obedience trained, and good with children or other animals. Try to give shelter staff a detailed description of your pet's medical history, behavior, and likes and dislikes. Also make sure shelter staff know how to contact you if they have more questions. To ease the pain of separation, you may want to take photos of your pet for you and your children.

The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) First Strike® campaign offers these frequently asked questions and answers in our *Making the Connection: Protecting Your Pet from Domestic Violence* brochure. Call 1-888-213-0956 or e-mail [firststrike@hsus.org](mailto:firststrike@hsus.org) for copies. The HSUS also offers strategies for finding pet-friendly rental housing, sample policies and forms, and links to listings of rental properties that welcome pets at [www.rentwithpets.org](http://www.rentwithpets.org).

The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV) offers an information booklet—*Every Home a Safe Home*—with safety planning information. To order a copy, visit NCADV's website at [www.ncadv.org/products/productshome.htm](http://www.ncadv.org/products/productshome.htm).

The National Domestic Violence Hotline (1-800-799-SAFE) provides information on local domestic violence resources and has a database with more than 4,000 shelters and service providers in the United States, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.



**Model Forms**

The HSUS developed the following model forms to help agencies interested in developing Safe Havens for Animals programs. The forms were adapted from several established programs. The HSUS provides these forms as samples only.

*Have your attorney review any form before you use it.*

# Owner Agreement

\_\_\_\_\_ [insert name of program]

I, \_\_\_\_\_, [insert pet owner's name] owner/custodian of the animal(s) described below, hereby release my animal(s) to \_\_\_\_\_ [insert agency name] for temporary foster care beginning on \_\_\_\_\_ [insert date], and agree to the following: (please initial each line)

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. This fostering agreement is set for a period of time ending by \_\_\_\_\_ [insert date].
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. I understand and agree that I will have the opportunity to ask for an extension of care for my animal(s), but \_\_\_\_\_ [insert agency name] may not be able to accommodate my request.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. I understand and agree that if I do not reclaim my animal(s) by \_\_\_\_\_ [insert date], or make other arrangements acceptable to \_\_\_\_\_ [insert agency name], I will be deemed to have surrendered all my ownership rights and interests of any kind in the said animal(s).
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. I understand and agree that after \_\_\_\_\_ [insert date], \_\_\_\_\_ [insert agency name] may put the animal(s) up for adoption and attempt to place him/her/them in a permanent home or may euthanize the animal(s). The decision whether to euthanize the animal(s) or to allow adoption after said date will be made by \_\_\_\_\_ [insert agency name] in its sole and absolute discretion.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. \_\_\_\_\_ [insert agency name] will return my animal(s) only to me, unless I surrender my animal(s) to \_\_\_\_\_ [insert agency name] or designate a person to claim my animal in my place, in which case I will notify \_\_\_\_\_ [insert agency name] at least \_\_\_\_\_ [insert number] hours before. If I do designate a person to claim my animal(s), it shall be in writing, witnessed, and notarized. I understand that \_\_\_\_\_ [insert agency name] will not release my animal to the abusive person from whom I am seeking shelter.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. \_\_\_\_\_ [insert agency name] will provide the best care possible for the animal during the sheltering period but notes there are inherent dangers and risks when dealing with any animal, including but not limited to changes in the animal's behavior or weight, contraction of contagious disease, or loss or death of the animal. Accordingly, I hereby absolutely and unconditionally release and discharge \_\_\_\_\_ [insert agency name], including its employees, successors, assigns, directors, officers, agents, or volunteers, from and against any and all claims, obligations, liabilities of every nature and kind whatsoever relating to or arising from fostering my animal. In addition, if said animal(s) bites or injures any human or other animal, I will hold harmless and indemnify, and protect \_\_\_\_\_ [insert agency name] from any claim or suit filed by anyone as a result of such an incident.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. I understand and agree that my animal(s) may [or will] be fostered at \_\_\_\_\_ [insert agency name], a boarding kennel, a veterinarian's office, or with a qualified foster volunteer. Should \_\_\_\_\_ [insert agency name] choose to kennel my animal at an alternate location, I will not hold any such boarding kennel, veterinarian's office, their staff, or the qualified foster volunteer liable for any illness, injury, or death of my animal(s).
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. I understand and agree that \_\_\_\_\_ [insert agency name] is a completely confidential program, and I will not divulge any information regarding the location of my animal(s) enrolled in this program to anyone. I understand and agree that if I inform anyone that my animal(s) are enrolled in this program—particularly the abusive person from whom I am seeking refuge—then this agreement is null and void and I will be notified as such. Upon nullification, I will have \_\_\_\_\_ [insert number] hours

to reclaim my animal(s) from \_\_\_\_\_ [insert agency name]. Should I fail to reclaim my animal(s) in that designated \_\_\_\_\_ [insert number] hour time frame, I understand and agree that I will relinquish permanent ownership and custody of said animal(s) to \_\_\_\_\_ [insert agency name]. At such time, \_\_\_\_\_ [insert agency name] has the absolute right and authority to place said animal(s) into new homes, euthanize said animal(s), or otherwise find appropriate permanent placement.

9. \_\_\_\_\_ [insert agency name] and/or its designated off-site foster care provider will provide daily food, water, socialization, exercise, and basic preventive care for my animal(s).

10. I understand that \_\_\_\_\_ [insert agency name] reserves the right to seek veterinary care without approval by me. I acknowledge that should medical care and attention for the animal be warranted, \_\_\_\_\_ [insert agency name] may provide only the minimum care to comfort and stabilize the animal. Should my animal(s) require extended veterinary care, I agree to reimburse \_\_\_\_\_ [insert agency name] for any veterinary attention needed.

11. I understand that \_\_\_\_\_ [insert agency name] reserves the right to euthanize any animal in its care should a licensed veterinarian deem the animal's health to be so impaired that to sustain the animal would be inhumane.

12. In the event \_\_\_\_\_ [insert agency name] determines my animal(s) has been abused upon intake, \_\_\_\_\_ [insert agency name] may be required by law not to release the animal(s) pending investigation.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Owner's name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness's name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Owner's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### Description of Animal(s)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Animal's name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Species/breed/type

Sex:  Male  Female

Altered:  Yes  No

Age/birth date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Animal's name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Species/breed/type

Sex:  Male  Female

Altered:  Yes  No

Age/birth date \_\_\_\_\_

# Owner Information

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Current address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Safe phone number to reach you or leave a message \_\_\_\_\_

Pager/alternate phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Employer's name \_\_\_\_\_

Employer's address \_\_\_\_\_

Work phone number \_\_\_\_\_

## Emergency Information

Contact person other than owner \_\_\_\_\_

Agency name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Day phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Evening phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Pager/alternate phone number \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

## Referral Source

Agency \_\_\_\_\_

Contact name \_\_\_\_\_

Day phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Evening phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Pager/alternate phone number \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

## Other Information

What is your relationship to the abusive person? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you think the abuser will try to find the animal(s)?  Yes  No  Don't know

Is your animal(s) included in a Restraining Order or Emergency Protective Order?  Yes  No

If yes, date order was granted \_\_\_\_\_

Order number \_\_\_\_\_

Does the abusive person have any legal claim to the animal(s)?  Yes  No  Don't know

For safety and security reasons, please provide the name and a description of the abusive person:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Gender:  Male  Female

Hair color \_\_\_\_\_

Eye color \_\_\_\_\_

Height \_\_\_\_\_ Weight \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Place of employment \_\_\_\_\_

Work number \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide a description of the abusive person's vehicle:

Make \_\_\_\_\_ Model \_\_\_\_\_

Year \_\_\_\_\_ Color \_\_\_\_\_

License plate number \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a photograph of the abusive person that we can keep or copy?  Yes  No

# Animal Intake Form

[insert program name]

## Complete separate intake form for each animal

Name of animal \_\_\_\_\_

Species of animal \_\_\_\_\_

Nickname \_\_\_\_\_

Breed/type \_\_\_\_\_

Description and unique characteristics \_\_\_\_\_

Sex:  Male  Female      Altered:  Yes  No  Unknown      Age/date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

## Medical Information

You may need to contact your veterinarian for this information. While not having current vaccinations will not keep your animal(s) out of the \_\_\_\_\_, it is important for us to have this information for the safety of your pet and other animals.  
[insert program name]

Date of rabies vaccination \_\_\_\_\_

Date of annual combination distemper vaccination \_\_\_\_\_

Date of bordatella (kennel cough) vaccination for dog \_\_\_\_\_

Has your cat ever been tested/vaccinated for feline leukemia?       Yes       No

Has your dog been tested for heartworms within the past year?       Yes       No

What flea and heartworm preventative do you use? \_\_\_\_\_

Current medications, allergies, or ailments \_\_\_\_\_

When are medications given and how (i.e., placed in a treat)? \_\_\_\_\_

Important medical information for other companion animals \_\_\_\_\_

## Feeding Information

Type of food (brand, formula, canned, or kibble) \_\_\_\_\_

Amount of food \_\_\_\_\_

Feeding schedule \_\_\_\_\_

Treats \_\_\_\_\_

Additional information on feeding \_\_\_\_\_

## Housing Information

Present housing situation (indoor/outdoor) \_\_\_\_\_

Where does the animal sleep? \_\_\_\_\_

Walk/run schedule \_\_\_\_\_

Is the animal house trained or litter box trained?  Yes  No

Is the animal crate trained?  Yes  No

Will the animal chew/scratch furniture, clothing, doors? \_\_\_\_\_

Other behavior problems \_\_\_\_\_

Did you bring items that you would like kept with your pet (favorite toy, bedding, etc.)? \_\_\_\_\_

## Behavior Information

Good with dogs?  Yes  No  Not been around

Good with cats?  Yes  No  Not been around

Good with other animals?  Yes  No  Not been around

Good with children?  Yes  No  Not been around

Good with men?  Yes  No  Not been around

Good with women?  Yes  No  Not been around

Activity level:  Very active  Moderately active  Not active

To your knowledge, has the animal bitten or scratched anyone within the past 6 months?  Yes  No

If yes, what were the circumstances (when, why, and how severe)? \_\_\_\_\_

Has the animal ever been deemed vicious or dangerous in the state of \_\_\_\_\_ or another state?  Yes  No  
[insert state]

Under what circumstances will the animal bite, scratch, threaten, or show excessive fear? \_\_\_\_\_

Commands:  Sit  Down  Stay  Come  Other (please list) \_\_\_\_\_

Is there additional information that you would like to tell us about this animal? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



# Foster Care Agreement between Shelter and Foster Caregiver

This agreement was made this \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ by and between \_\_\_\_\_ (hereinafter called "Foster Caregiver"), and \_\_\_\_\_ (hereinafter called "Shelter").

The purpose of the \_\_\_\_\_ program is to provide temporary care for animals that belong to survivors of family violence who are seeking refuge and counseling. This program offers a safe and life-saving alternative to leaving the animal(s) in a home with an abusive and dangerous partner.

Foster Caregiver acknowledges that he/she is not becoming the owner of said animal, but is willing to provide humane care for such animal until its owner is able to reassume custody and care.

In consideration of the premises and the covenants herein contained, it is agreed between Shelter and Foster Caregiver as follows:

1. Shelter delivers to Foster Caregiver and Foster Caregiver hereby accepts from Shelter a certain animal described below and Foster Caregiver agrees to humanely take care of said animal until the owner is able to reclaim said animal, but in no event shall Foster Caregiver become obligated or have any right to keep said animal for longer than \_\_\_\_\_ days from \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Foster Caregiver agrees that upon the end of \_\_\_\_\_ day period or sooner if contacted by the \_\_\_\_\_ coordinator, Foster Caregiver will immediately, peacefully, and voluntarily deliver said animal to Shelter, and will make no claim of ownership, title, right, or interest in said animal.
3. Foster Caregiver understands the responsibilities and commitments associated with providing humane care for said animal. Foster Caregiver also agrees to comply with all \_\_\_\_\_ policies and procedures.
4. Foster Caregiver understands and agrees that the \_\_\_\_\_ program is a completely confidential program and will not divulge any information regarding participation in the program or the identity and location of the animal.
5. Shelter agrees to keep location of said animal and Foster Caregiver's name, address, phone number, and other personal information confidential in order to protect the safety of Foster Caregiver and said animal.
6. Foster Caregiver agrees not to alter in any way the appearance of the animal being fostered. This includes declawing and cropping of ears or tails.
7. Foster Caregiver agrees to provide adequate food, water, shelter, and kind treatment for said animal at all times. In addition, Foster Caregiver must adhere to all state and local animal laws. Foster Caregiver agrees to follow all additional written instructions from the owner and/or Shelter.
8. Foster Caregiver agrees to notify Shelter as to any behavioral or health problems of said animal. Shelter reserves the exclusive right to determine the proper course of action to take upon such notification.
9. Foster Caregiver will notify Shelter within 24 hours in the event any change occurs in the address or telephone number listed below.
10. Foster Caregiver will notify the coordinator of the \_\_\_\_\_ program immediately in the event of an emergency so that appropriate arrangements can be made to transfer said animal to Shelter or another approved foster caregiver.

11. Foster Caregiver is undertaking these obligations with no claim, now or in the future, to any types of compensation or reimbursement for caring for said animal, and the further consideration for undertaking this obligation and caring for said animal is that Foster Caregiver is receiving satisfaction and enjoyment from undertaking this obligation of his/her own free will and because he/she wants to do so and derives satisfaction from doing so.

12. Foster Caregiver agrees that accidental animal bites or other injuries to humans and other animals do occur, and agrees to hold harmless and indemnify, and protect Shelter, from any claim or suit filed by anyone as a result of such an incident. In addition, Shelter will not be responsible if said animal should damage or destroy property belonging to Foster Caregiver, or shall transfer any disease or internal or external parasites to other animals in Foster Caregiver's care.

13. If the owner does not reclaim said animal, and Foster Caregiver wishes to adopt said animal, Foster Caregiver must go through Shelter adoption program screening process. Shelter reserves the right to determine final disposition of said animal.

14. Foster Caregiver agrees to keep said animal in his/her house and under supervision. Foster Caregiver also agrees to keep a foster dog on a leash at all times when not on his/her private property. Foster Caregiver agrees to keep a foster cat inside the house at all times.

15. Foster Caregiver agrees to keep a collar and identification tag on said animal at all times.

16. Foster Caregiver agrees to let Shelter inspect Foster Caregiver's premises where said animal is being kept anytime to ascertain and satisfy itself or said animal's owner that said animal is well cared for.

17. This Agreement is the entire agreement of the parties, and there are no oral promises or representations made in addition to this contract and it may only be changed in a writing signed by both Shelter and Foster Caregiver.

18. Foster Caregiver releases Shelter's employees, successors, assigns, directors, officers, or agents from any and all liability arising from the fostering of said animal. If said animal should harm anyone or cause damage to Foster Caregiver's property, Foster Caregiver agrees to use his/her homeowner's insurance or other means for any reimbursement.

Animal's name \_\_\_\_\_

Species \_\_\_\_\_

Breed \_\_\_\_\_

Sex:  Male  Female      Altered:  Yes  No  Unknown

Description (color, special markings, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

I acknowledge that I have read and accepted this Foster Care Agreement.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness's name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# Contract Extension Agreement

Attention \_\_\_\_\_  
[insert owner's name]

Please, read, sign, and date this agreement and fax or send a copy to \_\_\_\_\_  
[insert agency name, address, and fax number]  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

A request for the extension of your original "Owner Agreement" contract has been granted. The initial contract period began on \_\_\_\_\_  
[insert date] for the temporary foster of your companion animal(s) listed below.

Animal's name \_\_\_\_\_

Tag number \_\_\_\_\_

Animal's name \_\_\_\_\_

Tag number \_\_\_\_\_

Animal's name \_\_\_\_\_

Tag number \_\_\_\_\_

Animal's name \_\_\_\_\_

Tag number \_\_\_\_\_

The contract has been extended beginning on \_\_\_\_\_  
[insert date] and ending on \_\_\_\_\_  
[insert date]. All terms, agreements, and conditions of the original contract continue during the extension period.

My companion animal(s) will be considered abandoned as per state civil code section \_\_\_\_\_  
[insert code section number] and will be deemed the property of \_\_\_\_\_  
[insert agency name] if I do not claim my animal(s) by \_\_\_\_\_  
[insert date].

I certify that I have read, fully understand, and accept all terms of this and the original agreement.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Agency authorizing signature Date

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Animal Abuse Survey

1. Do you currently have a pet?  Yes  No

If "yes" how many? \_\_\_\_\_

If "yes" where is the pet now? \_\_\_\_\_

If "no" have you had a pet in the last 12 months?  Yes  No

2. Type:  Dog  Cat  Bird  Fish  Rabbit  Guinea Pig  Hamster  Ferret

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

3. Has the abuser ever threatened to hurt your pet?  Yes  No

4. Has the abuser ever mistreated a pet by:

Hitting, kicking, striking, punching, or throwing pet

Depriving pet of food or water

Leaving pet outside in extreme heat or cold for prolonged period

Refusing to take sick or injured pet to vet

Giving pet illegal drugs or alcohol

Sexual abuse

Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

If so, did your pet require veterinary treatment?  Yes  No

5. If the abuser mistreated your pet, how often did this happen? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Has fear that the abuser will harm your pet ever caused you to delay going to a shelter or other safe place away from your partner?  Yes  No

7. Has fear that the abuser will harm your pet ever caused you to delay calling the police for help?  Yes  No

8. Has fear that the abuser will harm your pet ever caused you to refuse to file charges against him/her?  Yes  No

9. Would you require assistance in finding temporary housing and care for your pet if you were to go to a shelter or other safe place?  Yes  No

10. Do you have children?  Yes  No

If yes, please specify number and ages \_\_\_\_\_

11. Has the abuser ever threatened or harmed your pet in front of the children?  Yes  No

If "yes," have the children who witnessed this ever threatened, injured, or killed a pet or other animal?  Yes  No

# Confidential Evaluation

\_\_\_\_\_ [insert program name]

\_\_\_\_\_ [insert agency name(s)] is pleased to have made the \_\_\_\_\_ [insert program name] available to you during your time of need. We hope our services met your expectations and provided you with a peace of mind that your animal(s) were being well cared for. We are interested in your feedback about our program. Please answer the following questions. Thank you for your comments.

1. Were you pleased with the service provided by the \_\_\_\_\_ [insert program name] program?  Yes  No

Please explain \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. What were the benefits of the \_\_\_\_\_ [insert program name] program?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. What were the disadvantages of having your animal(s) in the program?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Is there anything else this program could have done to assist you?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Would you recommend that friends or family members utilize our services if they were in a family violence situation and needed temporary care for their animal(s)?  Yes  No

Please explain \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# In a violent family everyone could be a victim

**A**ND THAT INCLUDES THE FAMILY PET.  
Animal abuse may be a warning sign of a violent home. It may be used as a threat as a spouse, a parent, an elderly person, or a child. But it's always serious. And just like other family members, pets need a safe place to be. That's why The Humane Society of the United States encourages communities to create a Safe Haven for Animals program that provides temporary sheltering options for pets.

**ANIMAL CRUELTY IS FAMILY VIOLENCE.**  
To find out more about the connection and about Safe Havens for Animals, visit us.

Preventing the proliferation of all animals  
**THE HUMANE SOCIETY  
OF THE UNITED STATES**  
2100 L Street, N.W. Washington, DC 20037  
202-452-1100 [www.humanesociety.org](http://www.humanesociety.org) THS121106



To order our Safe Havens for Animals™ poster or flyer or for more information on The HSUS First Strike® campaign to raise awareness of the connection between animal cruelty and human violence, e-mail [firststrike@hsus.org](mailto:firststrike@hsus.org); write to First Strike, The HSUS, 2100 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037; visit [www.hsus.org/firststrike](http://www.hsus.org/firststrike); or call 1-888-213-0956.

Promoting the protection of all animals

**THE HUMANE SOCIETY  
OF THE UNITED STATES®**

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