



Sheltering Pets and People

A Toolkit for Women's Transition House and Support
Programs

April 2022



BC Society of
Transition Houses

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Introduction

The links between violence against women¹ and animal maltreatment and abuse are well documented, as are the challenges faced by women with pets trying to secure safe shelter when leaving a violent situation. The love and connection women feel for their pets can significantly impact their ability or willingness to leave their pet behind with the abuser. Within Women's Transition Housing and Support Programs (WTHSP)² in British Columbia and across Canada, pet-sheltering programs and partnerships with Animal Welfare Organizations, SPCAs and humane societies, and veterinary clinics are growing in response to this need so that women are not faced with the choice of abandoning their pets or accessing safety at a Transition Housing Program.

As with initiating any changes within an organization, starting a pet-sheltering program can seem daunting and overwhelming. Questions arise such as, where do we start? Do we have the space? How much will this cost? How will this impact staff and residents? This toolkit aims to address these pressing questions, to help organizations work through their concerns, to identify what pet-sheltering options works best for your organization and community, and to offer policy templates and sample forms.

Information on six primary pet-sheltering program options is offered to assist organizations in determining which model works best for them, and to develop programs that will be feasible and sustainable, thus meeting the needs of women, children and youth and their companion animals in their community.

The six pet-sheltering program options are:

1. On-site sheltering for pets in residents' rooms
2. On-site sheltering for pets in a purpose-built space (inside)
3. On-site sheltering for pets in a purpose-built space (outside)
4. Foster care
5. Off-site boarding kennel
6. Informal services

¹ The term "woman" and "women" and the use of feminine pronouns in this toolkit refers to, and is inclusive of, all self-identified women. While gender-based violence has significant impacts on cis-gender women and girls in Canada, 2SLGBTQIA+ and gender diverse people are disproportionately impacted by experiences of violence and face additional barriers in accessing anti-violence services and supports.

² The [Women's Transition Housing and Supports Program](#) (WTHSP) resulted from a grass roots movement to provide shelter to women in B.C. seeking refuge from domestic violence. After the administrative transfer of the program to the Ministry of Housing and Social Development in 2009, BC Housing, the [BC Society of Transition Houses](#) and service providers across the province came together to develop the [Women's Transition Housing and Supports Program Framework - February 2019](#). The program is funded through the provincial government and administered by BC Housing. Throughout this toolkit we refer to the Women's Transition Housing & Supports Program (WTHSP) which is inclusive of Transition Houses, Safe Homes and Second Stage Housing. However, not all of the Toolkit information will be applicable for every program.

This toolkit also offers relevant information on the legal, insurance and health and safety factors that need to be considered, and outlines key steps to working towards developing a pet-sheltering program in your organization.

Women fleeing violence face a multitude of complex individual and systemic barriers to leaving and finding safety. Offering a pet-sheltering program eliminates one barrier and supports women and their pets in finding safety and healing together. *Shelter Voices 2018* indicated that of the 215 Transition Houses across Canada that responded to the national survey:

- 14% offer an on-site pet-sheltering program;
- 38% have a local partnership program they can rely on; and,
- 12% of Transition Houses were in the process of developing a program or partnership within the next year.³

We hope this toolkit can support Transition Housing programs (TH's) to further develop and/or formalize existing programs, and ultimately increase options and supportive services to women fleeing violence with their pets.

³ Women's Shelters Canada. "Shelter Voices." 2018, https://endvaw.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/shelterVoices_ENG_2018_WEB.pdf

The Links Between Violence Against Women and Animal Cruelty

Pet ownership is very popular in Canada. Data from 2020 indicates that 58% of Canadian households report owning at least one dog or cat, and 75% of families with children (ages 6-11) have at least one pet. The majority of Canadians consider their pets to be part of the family and valuable sources of emotional support, comfort and safety.^{4,5} When women experiencing violence are isolated in their relationship, they may rely on their pets heavily for emotional support, as well as for a sense of protection and security.^{6,7,8} Animal cruelty⁹ affects a woman's decision to leave an abusive relationship and seek support. It has an ongoing psychological and emotional impact on the woman, children and pets including feelings of increased fear, anger, guilt, and grief.^{10,11} Understanding the role pets play in the lives of women experiencing violence, and that women may not want to be separated from their pets and/or fear leaving them with the abuser, can help Women's Transition Housing and Support Programs develop relevant policy and practice.

Research indicates a prevalence of animal maltreatment in relationships where there is violence against women.¹² According to Canadian research, 89% of women in domestic violence situations who had pets reported that the pets had been mistreated by their partner.¹³ Women experiencing violence might also experience their pets being threatened, emotionally and physically abused, neglected, and killed.¹⁴

There is a significant relationship between violence against women and animal cruelty. Both are often perpetrated concurrently, with animal cruelty used as a mechanism to control the non-

⁴ Women's Shelters Canada, "Shelter Voices"

⁵ Barrett, B., Fitzgerald, A., Peirone, A., Stevenson, R., & Cheung, C.H. (2018). Help-seeking among abused women with pets: Evidence from a Canadian sample. *Violence and Victims*, 33(4). doi 10.1891/0886-6708

⁶ Barrett et al., Help-seeking

⁷ Fitzgerald, A. J. (2007). "They gave me a reason to live": The protective effects of companion animals on the suicidality of abused women. *Humanity & Society*, 31(4), 355–378. <https://doi.org/10.1177/016059760703100405>

⁸ Giesbrecht, C.J. (2021). Intimate partner violence, animal maltreatment, and concern for animal safekeeping: A survey of survivors who owned pets and livestock. *Violence Against Women*.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/10778012211034215>

⁹ Throughout this document the language of animal cruelty, animal maltreatment and animal abuse are used interchangeably.

¹⁰ Cleary, M., Thapa, D.K., West, S., Westman, M. & Kornhaber, R. (2021). Animal abuse in the context of adult intimate partner violence: a systematic review. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 61(November-December).

¹¹ Barrett et al., Help-seeking

¹² Giesbrecht, Intimate partner violence; Barrett et al., Help-seeking; Collins, E.A., Cody, A.M., McDonald, S.E., Nicotera, N., Ascione, F.R. & Williams, J.H. (2018). A template analysis of intimate partner violence survivors' experiences of animal maltreatment: implications for safety planning and intervention. *Violence Against Women*, 24(4), 452-476.; Fitzgerald, Amy; Barrett, Betty; Gray, Allison. (2020). The connection between animal abuse, emotional abuse, and financial abuse in intimate relationships: Evidence from a nationally representative sample of the general public, *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. 37(5-6):2331-2353. doi: 10.1177/0886260520939197

¹³ Barrett, B., Fitzgerald, A., Stevenson, R., & Chung, C.H. (2017). Animal maltreatment as a risk marker of more frequent and severe forms of intimate partner violence. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. doi 10.1177/0886260517719542

¹⁴ Giesbrecht, Intimate partner violence; Fitzgerald et al, The connection between; Barrett et al, Help-seeking.

offending partner. Studies show that the primary purpose of animal cruelty when there is violence in a relationship is to control and deliberately upset the partner by hurting, terrorizing, and intimidating the pet. Jealousy of a woman's closeness with her pets was also perceived to have contributed to a perpetrator's cruelty towards a pet.¹⁵

Violence against pets and other animals has been recognized as a risk factor for severe forms of violence against humans¹⁶ and domestic homicide¹⁷. Women who reported that their partner abused their pet were more likely to suffer from frequent and severe forms of violence.¹⁸ Abusers who maltreat their pets are more dangerous than those who do not, and exhibit more controlling behaviors, more types of violence and more severe violence, particularly sexual violence, marital rape, emotional violence, and stalking.¹⁹ A study of calls into an American domestic violence crisis line determined that the three greatest risk factors for lethality were access to weapons, threats of suicide, and threats to mutilate or kill the family pets.²⁰

Decision making and the emotional bond with pets

"I wasn't going to leave unless I could take the pets with me. So, I had to find a place for all of us. I'd be worried he would take violence out on the dog". (Participant 87)²¹

The shared experience of violence can make women closer to their pets.²² Research indicates that when a pet is harmed by the abusive partner, this impacts a woman's decision making about leaving. Sometimes, women are more likely to delay leaving as they do not want to leave the pet with the abuser, worry they will not be able to take their animals with them or keep the animals after separation. However, in other cases, harm to animals can solidify a woman's decision to end the relationship and try to escape to safety with their pet.²³

¹⁵ Cleary et al., A systematic review.

¹⁶ Giesbrecht, Intimate partner violence; Barrett et al., Help-seeking.

¹⁷ Office of the Chief Coroner for Ontario (2019). *Domestic Violence Death Review Committee 2018 Annual Report*. <https://www.mcscs.jus.gov.on.ca/english/DeathInvestigations/OfficeChiefCoroner/Publicationsandreports/DVDR2018Report.html>

¹⁸ Barrett, B. J., Fitzgerald, A., Stevenson, R., & Cheung, C. H. (2020). Animal maltreatment as a risk marker of more frequent and severe forms of intimate partner violence. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 35*(23-24), 5131–5156. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260517719542>

¹⁹ Barrett et al., Help-seeking.

²⁰ Arkow, P. (2021). "Humane Criminology": An Inclusive Victimology Protecting Animals and People. *Social Sciences, 10*(9), 335. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci10090335>

²¹ Collins et al., A template analysis.

²² Cleary et al., A systematic review.

²³ Barrett et al., Help-seeking; Giesbrecht, Intimate partner violence; Collins et al., A template analysis; Wuerch, M. A., Giesbrecht, C. J., Jeffery, N., Knutson, T., & Wach, F. (2021). Intimate Partner Violence and Concern for Animal Care and Safekeeping: Experiences of Service Providers in Canada. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 36*(9-10), 4815-4825. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260518795503>; Wuerch, M. A., Giesbrecht, C. J., Price, J. A. B., Knutson, T., & Wach, F. (2020). Examining the Relationship Between Intimate Partner Violence and Concern for Animal Care and Safekeeping. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 35*(9-10), 1867-1887. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260517700618>.

Among Canadian samples, the percentage of women who report delaying leaving the abusive situation due to their pets has ranged from 43% to 56%.²⁴ However, it is important to note that these numbers rely on samples of women who are already in a Transition Housing program.

In 2018 research conducted across 16 Canadian Transition Houses, researchers found that while threats to the safety of a household pet increased women's desire to leave:

- 56% delayed leaving due to concern about pet's safety;
- 47% would have left earlier if they could have brought their pet to the TH with them;
- 60% of women in the 2018 study left their pet with her abuser; and,
- approximately 33% considered returning to the abuser because he had her pets.²⁵

A recent American study (2021) by the [Urban Resource Institute and National Domestic Violence Hotline](#) revealed similar findings, reporting that:

- 97% of hotline callers said that keeping their pets with them is an important factor in deciding whether to seek shelter;
- 50% would not consider shelter if they could not take their pets with them;
- 48% feared the abuser would harm or kill the pets;
- 30% said their children had witnessed or been aware of abuse or threats to a pet; and
- 91% indicated that their pets' emotional support and physical protection are significant in their ability to survive and heal.²⁶

This decision is further complicated when the woman has children who are attached to the pet. Children may show signs of anger, frustration, and stress when leaving the pets in the abusive household, which can cause further stress to the woman.²⁷

Women experiencing violence engage in a continual cost-benefit analysis when deciding if and when to seek help, and women with pets frequently prioritize their pets above themselves. Fear for the welfare of their pet is a barrier that keeps women from leaving abusive situations to find safety and healing. Additionally, once in a safe location, separation from a beloved pet can create an additional trauma. Knowing what supports are available for their pets can encourage help-seeking.

²⁴ Barrett et al, Help-seeking.

²⁵ Women's Shelters Canada, "Shelter Voices"

²⁶ Arkow, "Humane Criminology"

²⁷ Phillips, A. (2020). Sheltering Animals & Families Together: SAF-T Program Start Up Manual (Manual).

Why Shelter Pets?

“I lived in my car until I found someone to take in my dog, then I went to the [domestic violence] shelter.” (Participant 74)²⁸

Safety

Many women experiencing abuse are devastated to leave their pets, regardless of whether the animal is kept in the abusive household, or if they are sheltered in a safe foster home. They can feel isolated and more vulnerable without their pets, as for many, pets are considered family. The guilt of leaving their pets may cause women to return to the abusive household to care for, visit, or attempt to retrieve the animal(s), putting them in a risky and dangerous situation.²⁹

Lack of access to safe pet-sheltering services (e.g., temporary pet-fostering programs) and the inability to access shelters or housing that would accept pets results in women, children, and/or pets remaining in abusive environments longer than desired, and/or being homeless due to their inability to access services that shelter pets. This has a significant impact on the safety of women and their pets. Offering pet-sheltering programs in a Transitional Housing program removes many barriers to leaving, as it is completely free for the woman, coincides exactly with the woman’s length of stay, and the woman’s location and personal information are kept strictly confidential.³⁰

The BC Housing agreements with Women’s Transition Housing and Support Programs (WTHSP) includes the following language in regards to offering pet-sheltering options to women leaving violence:

“The Provider will strive to accommodate individuals who may otherwise encounter barriers to Services because of certain circumstances. In particular, the Provider will reasonably accommodate individuals with pets and will make reasonable efforts to engage in community partnerships with agencies who can assist in accommodating pets.”

While BC Housing recognizes that not all WTHSP may be able to accommodate pets, programs are encouraged to work with community partners (e.g., BCSPCA, veterinarians) to support and house pets.

²⁸ Collins, et al., A template analysis.

²⁹ Praxis Consulting. (October 23, 2021). Pet-friendly shelter viability report. Saskatchewan SPCA, PATHS, and STOPS to Violence. https://www.violencelink.ca/files/ugd/f9f2f2_4568d7e4028e47f6a854d7e0a97cc288.pdf

³⁰ Praxis, Pet-friendly shelter.

Emotional benefits of pets

It is well accepted that pets and their human companions share a special bond. These bonds are strong and, in many cases, pets are seen as part of the family, providing comfort, friendship, and unconditional love to their human owners. This bond proves to be especially important for individuals experiencing violence.³¹ The role of pets often extends far beyond simple pet ownership and many pets provide comfort and emotional support in addition to general companionship.³²

Fitzgerald (2007) found that:

- Pets helped women cope with the abuse by keeping them grounded, “kept them going”.
- Pets provided unconditional love and loyalty, something that was missing from the lives of women experiencing abuse in relationship with their partner.
- In some instances, pets tried to protect women during an abusive incident.³³

According to the Pet Friendly Shelter Viability Report (2021), pet-friendly Transition Houses and Second Stage housing that allows the women and their children to remain with, and care for, their pet(s) on their own provides a sense of security and comfort for everyone, including the animal(s). Offering pet-sheltering programs in your Transition Housing program offers an emotional benefit as it supports the human-animal bond, which can be critical during times of stress and trauma.

For women and children with experiences of violence, including the many who suffer post-traumatic stress from their experiences of violence, there are many possible health benefits of remaining together with their pets. Before, during and after violent episodes, animals and humans can provide each other with a sense of protection, solace, love and loyalty.³⁴ The reciprocal nature of caring between women, children and their pets can also be part of their healing.

In addition to improving safety and healing for women and pets, pets can have a positive impact on children, including:

- benefit childhood development by providing a sense of security and self-esteem to children;
- allow children to develop trust due to constancy, security, reliability, love, and affection;
- facilitate play, exploration, and independence;

³¹ Zdeljar, V. (2018, September). The links between pets and intimate partner violence. Burnaby, BC, Canada: Simon Fraser University FREDA Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children.

³² Zdeljar, The Links; Wuerch et al., Examining the relationship.

³³ Fitzgerald, “They gave me a reason to live”;

³⁴ Taylor, N., Fraser, H. & Riggs, D.W. (2020). Companion-animal-inclusive domestic violence practice: Implications for service delivery and social work. *Aotearoa New Zealand Social Work*, 32(4).

- promote responsibility and nurturing; and,
- provide social and emotional support.³⁵

Pets can also play a role in reducing social isolation, increasing social connectedness and mental wellness among humans.³⁶ Companion animals have been found to assuage loneliness and feelings of social isolation and can help humans feel loved especially during times when they may feel unlovable.³⁷

“An awful lot of people walk right back out the door when we can’t house their pets.”³⁸

As such, there is an evidenced need for programs and resources for women with experiences of violence and their pets. For many, leaving a pet behind with an abuser is akin to leaving a family member in danger. Separating women from their animal companions during times of crisis can cause further trauma to both woman and pet. Pets play an important role in the lives of women and children with experiences of violence and can contribute to their safety and healing, as well as that of the pet as it is not forced to stay with the abuser and not able to be used as leverage.³⁹

Challenges to Animal Care and Safekeeping

Finding shelter for both themselves and their pets, and/or temporary care for their pets, can be very challenging for women experiencing violence. Some of these challenges include:

- Transition Housing not allowing pets (e.g., lease or shelter restrictions) or not having space for animals;
- Difficulty housing larger animals;
- Animal Welfare Organizations, SPCAs and humane societies operating at full capacity;
- Limited availability of pet foster families or anonymity/confidentiality concerns;
- Certain programming only being available in urban areas;
- Lack of transportation for animals from rural areas;
- Financial barriers (e.g., boarding costs); and,
- Safety and legal concerns (e.g., pet health concerns, pets not being up-to-date with vaccinations, aggressive behavior).⁴⁰

A 2020 study suggests that both animal welfare and anti-violence service providers feel ill-equipped to properly deal with situations where violence against women results in a need for

³⁵ Phillips, SAF-T Program.

³⁶ Taylor, et al., Companion-animal-inclusive.

³⁷ Taylor, et al., Companion-animal-inclusive.

³⁸ Hageman, T.O., Langenderfer-Magruder, L, Greene, T. & Williams, J.H. (2018). Intimate partner violence survivors and pets: exploring practitioners' experiences in addressing client needs. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Human Services*, 99(2), 134-145. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1044389418767836>

³⁹ Zdeljar, The Links;

⁴⁰ Wuerch, et al., Concern for animal care and safekeeping.

animal safekeeping. Suggestions as to how to improve this include establishing partnerships and training across anti-violence and animal welfare agencies, policy change, and expanding infrastructure.⁴¹

In addition to the limitations of Transition Housing programs to accommodate pets, is the challenge of finding affordable rental housing that allows pets. Most rental housing does not allow pets, with dogs (especially larger dogs) allowed less often than cats. Housing that does allow pets is often more expensive, which creates an additional barrier to access and results in women often delaying their plans to leave until they feel that they can afford to do so.⁴²

Challenges specific to Rural Communities

Women living in rural and remote communities face additional barriers to accessing safety and are more vulnerable to violence.

- Rates of police-reported intimate partner violence experienced by rural women in Canada are 75% higher than those for urban women⁴³
- Rates of police-reported violent crime are 56% higher for rural women than the national rate⁴⁴.
- Women in rural and remote areas of Canada are more likely to be killed by violence than those living in urban areas.⁴⁵

In addition to the higher rates of violence and compounding barriers faced by women experiencing violence, women in rural areas face additional barriers to safety such a geographic isolation, distance to services, transportation challenges, which are exacerbated in the winter months⁴⁶ and the fact that they may also depend on larger animals for financial security and livelihood. Difficulties securing safety and shelter for pets are compounded when the animals are livestock. More research needs to be done on the intersection of violence against women and ownership of livestock and more resources are needed in situations where women own livestock and are fleeing violence.

⁴¹ Wuerch, et al., Examining the relationship.

⁴² Giesbrecht, Intimate Partner Violence.

⁴³ Conroy, S., (2021). Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile, 2019. *Juristat*. Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 85-002-X. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2021001/article/00001-eng.htm>

⁴⁴ Conroy, S., Burczycka, & Savage, L. (2019). Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile, 2018. *Juristat*. Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 85-002-X. P. 40. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2019001/article/00018-eng.pdf>

⁴⁵ Dawson, M., Sutton, S., Zecha, A., Boyd, C., Johnson, A., & Mitchell, A. (2021).

#CallItFemicide: Understanding Sex/Gender-Related Killings of Women and Girls in Canada, 2020. Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability. <https://femicideinCanada.ca/callitfemicide2020.pdf>

⁴⁶ Moffitt, P., Aujla, W., Giesbrecht, C. J., Grant, I., & Straatman, A. L. (2020). Intimate partner violence and COVID-19 in rural, remote, and northern Canada: Relationship, vulnerability and risk. *Journal of Family Violence*, Article first published online: November 19, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-020-00212-x>

Options for Sheltering Pets

As illustrated in the previous section, there are a myriad of reasons why offering options for the sheltering of pets in Women’s Transition Housing and Support Programs, and thus enabling women, children and their pets to stay together, is beneficial. If we know that many women will not leave an abusive relationship, or will delay leaving, because of concern for their pet’s safety, WTHSP’s ensuring shelter and safety for pets is an obvious step in the services offered.⁴⁷

There are six primary pet-sheltering options discussed in this toolkit. Pros and cons of each model are explored, as is the potential cost of each option, so that agencies can identify which kind of program will be most feasible and sustainable for their organization and meet the needs of women, children and youth and their companion animals in their community. The estimated costs provided are based on estimates from the US based [SAF-T program manual](#). Note that the cost will vary depending on the size of the program each WTHSP develops as well as the number of donations received in support of the program.

The six models for pet-sheltering are:

1. On-site pet-sheltering in residents’ rooms
2. On-site pet-sheltering in a purpose-built space (inside)
3. On-site pet-sheltering in a purpose-built space (outside)
4. Foster care
5. Off-site boarding kennel
6. Informal services

1. On-site pet-sheltering in residents’ rooms

Offering pet-friendly rooms in Transition Housing programs is commonly thought of as the preferred approach to pet-sheltering options. It is the easiest and fastest to implement, least expensive, least work for staff, the best way to preserve the human-animal bond and ensures that the entire family, including pets, are able to escape abuse.

Pro’s:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides the woman with access to her pet(s) at all hours of the day, significantly improving her mental well-being and eliminating separation anxiety.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most cost-effective option as it requires little to no cost for initial start-up, minimal monthly expenses, and fewer resources and infrastructure are required.

⁴⁷ Barrett, Help-seeking; Stevenson, R., Fitzgerald, A., & Barrett, B. (2018). Keeping pets safe in the context of intimate partner violence: Insights from domestic violence shelter staff in Canada.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces the spread of communicable diseases between animals, and zoonotic diseases between animals and humans, since they are kept separately in different rooms.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases the staff's capacity and efficiency within the TH, as the responsibility of looking after the animal is placed in the hands of the resident.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many of the challenges and risks can be mitigated with best practices.⁴⁸
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many WTHSP's have found that when the pets are in the same room as the resident, they do not have as many noise issues.
Cons:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The potential for allergies and noise complaints.

Recommendations:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocate a percentage of rooms as pet friendly.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide welcome kits that include pet supplies and educational materials designed to assist residents with the best practices for caring for their pets while staying at the TH.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a place (crate or kennel) where pets can be safely contained during a woman's intake.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When possible, avoid placing the pet room(s) near common areas to reduce the spread of allergens and decrease foot traffic near the pet's door that can create stress for the pet(s).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider adding a dog door to the pet room(s) that connect directly to an outside pet-relief space. Even if the space is tiny, this will help reduce some foot traffic and ensure they stay house-trained.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an outdoor play area and/or dog run that is fenced in for safety of the pets and other residents, especially children. It is important to provide spaces where the resident can spend time with their pet when they are not in their rooms. Keeping pets active and busy keeps them healthy and can prevent anxiety. Shade structures are

⁴⁸ Praxis, Pet-Friendly Shelter.

<p>crucial to keep a pet safe from overheating. Sun sails are an inexpensive option. See examples here of a dogs dream backyard and a dog run.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add a bench to encourage residents to spend time outside with their dog.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider a CATIO so cats can be outside. See example of a CATIO.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animals should be exercised during times that women with pets feel confident and secure that they will not be seen by their abusers, particularly in smaller/rural communities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No shared pet rooms between non-family members.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designate certain rooms as “pet friendly” or “no pets allowed” to help with allergy concerns and use HEPA filters in all rooms.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents are responsible for their own pets’ care and keep their pet inside the room (except when taking the pet outside).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each resident should agree to not let their pets roam free or disturb other residents and/or pets.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each pet must be in a carrier or on a leash when it is escorted in and out of the resident’s room.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine the maximum size animal that can be accommodated on-site, as well as which species and breeds you will allow.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult with local health regulators to ensure having pets on-site does not violate any health regulations, and inform them of the zones within the TH that animals are not allowed in, such as a kitchen.

Option 1 can be used in combination with any of the pet-sheltering options.

Proposed cost to start up = None to minimal

Proposed cost to maintain = \$250 - \$650/month and dependent on the number of pets being housed and amount of donations received. Includes monthly maintenance costs such as cleaning, providing medical care as needed, providing food and water, toys, litter, leashes, etc.

Start-up time = Immediate

Comfort for resident = Greatest comfort

Allergies and fear of pets = Controllable

2. On-site pet-sheltering in a purpose-built space (inside)

Option 2 provides on-site, heated kennels for pets inside the Women's Transition Housing and Support Programs. Kennelling the animals on-site provides a hybrid solution between sheltering animals in the resident's room and having animals sheltered off-site in an animal shelter, foster, or boarding kennel. The inside kennel can be in an adapted existing space, in a separate wing of the building or in a basement. The space will need to have a visitation space for residents to visit with their pets and to help lessen their stress to a new environment.

Pro's:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More cost effective than building new space. Can reduce costs by getting donations of crates and pet supplies or can spend more if building kennels, a visiting area etc....
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pets are on-site enabling residents to easily visit and spend time with their pet and know they are safe and secure.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces concerns with allergies and noise.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animals are kept separate and secure from other residents, reducing the risk of injury, allergies, or other health and safety concerns.
Cons:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slight disruption in human-animal bond.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for secondary space where families can spend time with pets.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Out of site out of mind. May be easier for pet owners to deprioritize pets' well-being, potentially placing more demands on WTHSP staff.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having animals kept in close quarters can increase the risk of spreading communicable diseases from animals. Some animals, especially those who have been abused, may experience a great deal of stress or aggression being in close contact with other animals.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An indoor kennel will be the second most expensive option, as this will require greater fixed start-up costs, while maintaining the same level of variable monthly costs as with Option 1.

Recommendations:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To avoid the possible transmission of disease and to ensure the safety of pets who may not get along, it is important not to house unfamiliar pets.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each pet must be contained in its own cage or crate unless they are from the same home.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a space in the room to accommodate residents visiting their pet.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have storage cabinets for storing cleaning and medical supplies, food, bowls and litter.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish times and frequency that pets are removed from their crates for exercise and waste elimination.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide facilities for daily cleaning and sanitation of the crates/kennels by the residents or, in their absence, assigned staff or volunteers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine the maximum size animal that can be accommodated on-site, as well as which species you will allow.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult with local health regulators to ensure having pets on-site does not violate any health regulations, and inform them of the zones within the TH that animals are not allowed in, such as a kitchen.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an outdoor play area and/or dog run that is fenced in for safety of the pets and other residents, especially children. It is important to provide spaces where the resident can spend time with their pet when they are not in their rooms. Keeping pets active and busy keeps them healthy and can prevent anxiety. Shade structures are crucial to keep a pet safe from overheating. Sun sails are an inexpensive option. See examples here of a dogs dream backyard and a dog run.

- Animals should be exercised during times that women with pets feel confident and secure that they will not be seen by their abusers, particularly in smaller/rural communities.
- If the resources and space is available, it may be beneficial to have a designated room for pets to be examined by a veterinarian. This room can also act as a room to store all supplies such as bowls, food, toys, litter, medical supplies, etc.

Option 2 can be used in combination with any of the pet-sheltering options.

Proposed cost to start up = \$300 - \$1500+. Costs might include purchasing animal crates and cages, building a kennelling area with concrete dividers between cages, and potentially purchasing separate ventilation systems to prevent allergies. The cost of this option highly depends on the existing infrastructure of the TH and what the TH has the capacity and resources for.

Proposed cost to maintain = \$250 - \$650/month and dependent on the number of pets being housed. Includes monthly maintenance costs such as cleaning, providing medical care as needed, providing food and water, toys, litter, leashes, etc.

Start-up time = A few days to weeks depending on the extent of the redesigning of the space.

Comfort for resident = Some comfort since pets are inside the same building where they are residing.

Allergies and fear of pets = Controllable

3. On-site pet-sheltering in a purpose-built space (outside)

Pet-sheltering option 3 provides secure and sheltered housing directly on the Women's Transition Housing and Support Programs property but outside of the main building where residents live. As with option 2, kennelling the animals on-site provides a hybrid solution between sheltering animals in the resident's room and having animals sheltered off-site in an animal shelter, foster, or boarding kennel.

Outdoor pet-sheltering options can include:

1. An outdoor kennel with chain-link fencing and sheltering (roof and side-wall protection);
2. A small outdoor building or shed kennel; or
3. Renovating a detached garage.

Pros:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pets are on-site enabling residents to easily visit and spend time with their pet and know they are safe and secure.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces concerns with allergies and noise.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animals are kept separate and secure from other residents, reducing the risk of injury, allergies, or other health and safety concerns.
Cons:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expensive to build.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time consuming to build/complete.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for noise complaints.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disruption in human-animal bond.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for secondary space where families can spend time with pets.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Out of site out of mind. May be easier for pet owners to deprioritize pets' well-being, potentially placing more demands on WTHSP staff.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having animals kept in close quarters can increase the risk of spreading communicable diseases from animals. Some animals, especially those who have been abused, may experience a great deal of stress or aggression being in close contact with other animals.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most expensive program option because it requires the construction of an entirely new building on the site of the TH or refurbishing an existing outdoor building, and possibly including a dog exercise area. This building needs to have proper heat for the winter, air conditioning for the summer, and air filtration/circulation.

Recommendations:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideally, these buildings should be at least 12' x 24" to accommodate kennels and a visiting area. Dog kennel will be a minimum of 4' x 6.'
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure there is proper heating/cooling and ventilation.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide sight barriers between the animal’s kennels, unless they are from the same home and get along.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide facilities for daily cleaning and sanitation of the kennels by the residents or, in their absence, assigned staff or volunteers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cats and other small pets should not be housed in an outdoor open-air kennel.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a space in the room to accommodate residents visiting their pet.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each kennel and building should have a secure lock to avoid theft or tampering with the animals.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an outdoor play area and/or dog run that is fenced in for safety of the pets and other residents, especially children. It is important to provide spaces where the resident can spend time with their pet when they are not in their rooms. Keeping pets active and busy keeps them healthy and can prevent anxiety. Shade structures are crucial to keep a pet safe from overheating. Sun sails are an inexpensive option. See examples here of a dogs dream backyard and a dog run.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animals should be exercised during times that women with pets feel confident and secure that they will not be seen by their abusers (i.e., particularly in smaller/rural communities).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine the maximum size animal that can be accommodated on-site, as well as which species you will allow.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the resources and space is available, it may be beneficial to have a designated room for pets to be examined by a veterinarian. This room can also act as a room to store all supplies such as bowls, food, toys, litter, medical supplies, etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply for one-time funding to do the build.

Option 3 can be used in combination with any of the pet-sheltering options.

Proposed cost to start up = \$1000 - \$10,000+. The cost of this option highly depends on whether there is an existing outbuilding that is being renovated or if an entirely new building is being built. In addition to building materials and labour costs, costs might include purchasing animal crates and cages, building a kennelling area with concrete dividers between cages, and ventilation and heating/cooling systems. This option may cost tens of thousands of dollars depending on the size of the building, and quality and price of materials.

Proposed cost to maintain = \$250 - \$650/month and dependent on the number of pets being housed. Includes monthly maintenance costs such as cleaning, providing medical care as needed, providing food and water, toys, litter, leashes, etc.

Start-up time = Several months

Comfort for resident = Some comfort since pets are on the same property where they are residing

Allergies and fear of pets = None

4. Foster care

When WTHSP sites do not have the ability or capacity to house pets on site, fostering pets is a 4th option available to women experiencing violence. Programs can coordinate and maintain a formal arrangement with Animal Welfare Organizations, SPCAs, humane societies, veterinary clinics and other pet fostering programs to provide options to women accessing their services and in need of shelter for their pets.

During the time that the pet is being fostered, the foster family would voluntarily be responsible for taking care of the animal(s) throughout either the entirety of, or a portion of, the woman's stay at the TH. Some foster programs may be able to care for pets for a few weeks, while others may have programs for longer durations.

Pros:

- Even if the WTHSP site has on-site pet-sheltering available, they might not always have the space to accommodate all of the pets needing shelter or may not take particular breeds. It is helpful to have a pet fostering program established for

when this situation occurs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pet is safe and secure.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination and administration with foster families is ideally done by partner organization, and thus not requiring much TH staff time.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner organization can apply for grants to sustain program.
Cons:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be a lack of availability of foster families.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidentiality concerns.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pet safety concerns.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women and children do not have access to their pet, disrupting the human-animal bond.

Recommendations:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify one or two key staff members to build relationships and coordinate foster program with local partners.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and utilize a formal agreement and/or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) when establishing a relationship with any fostering program or foster family. Paws For Hope's, No Pet Left Behind program provides sample forms.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with local Animal Welfare Organizations to identify a local farm or farms that could house/foster livestock and farm animals when needed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidentiality agreements should be signed to protect the identity and safety of each party. It is up to the woman as to what information is disclosed to the supporting parties, but it is recommended that this include any information that is pertinent to the safety of all involved, including pets.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a contingency plan in case the woman does not reclaim the pet.

Option 4 can be used in combination with any of the pet-sheltering options.

Proposed cost to start up = None

Proposed cost to maintain = None

Start-up time = Several months to ongoing to establish and maintain partnerships

Comfort for resident = Minimal

Allergies and fear of pets = None

5. Off-site Boarding Kennel

An off-site boarding kennel that houses and safekeeps pets is the 5th available option. Typically, these facilities house pets in cages (kennels), and some may include access to a dog run, or a dog park.

Pros:

- Pet is safe and secure.
- Even if a WTHSP has on-site pet-sheltering available, they might not always have the space to accommodate all of the pets needing shelter or may not take specific breeds or larger dogs. It is helpful to have a relationship with a boarding kennel established for when this situation occurs.

Cons:

- Expensive to use private kennels.
- Costs, such as pet deposits, for certain animal shelters can be prohibitive.
- Women and children do not have access to their pet, disrupting the human-animal bond.

Recommendations:

- As private kennels are expensive, explore local Animal Welfare Organizations, SPCAs and humane society's ability to house pets.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When pets are being sheltered at a local SPCA animal shelter or veterinarians, pets (when possible) should be kept in an area that is not accessible to the public.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidentiality agreements should be signed to protect the identity and safety of each party. It is up to the woman as to what information is disclosed to the supporting parties, but it is recommended that this include any information that is pertinent to the safety of all involved, including pets.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a contingency plan in case the woman does not reclaim the pet.

<p>Option 5 can be used in combination with any of the pet sheltering options.</p> <p>Proposed cost = Price will vary based on location and individual kennel. Expensive if using private kennel.</p> <p>Start-up time = Several months to ongoing to establish and maintain partnerships</p> <p>Comfort for resident = Minimal</p> <p>Allergies and fear of pets = None</p>

6. Informal services

When sheltering, kennelling, or fostering their animal is not possible, the final available pet-sheltering option may be for the woman to reach out to informal supports (i.e., family and friends) to look after their pet while they are at the TH.

Pros:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pet(s) does not have to stay with the abuser.
Cons:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pet safety concerns.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidentiality concerns.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woman and children may have limited access to their pet, disrupting the human-animal bond.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If using friends or family, abuser may try to get access to the pet.

Recommendations:

- Women are encouraged to set up a safety plan with friends and family who are caring for their pet as abuser may try and get access.
- Have a contingency plan in case the woman does not reclaim the pet.

Option 6 can be used in combination with any of the pet-sheltering options.

Proposed cost = Minimal

Start-up time = Minimal

Comfort for resident = Minimal

Allergies and fear of pets = None

Considerations for Pet-Sheltering Programs and the Practice and Policy Implications

There are a number of concerns and potential challenges that may impede an organization from developing a pet-sheltering program. Many of the challenges associated with off-site boarding, fostering and informal arrangements can be addressed through partnerships, MOU's and clearly addressing confidentiality and safety concerns. However, sheltering pets within the WTHSP site may result in concerns and challenges from staff and residents. Many of these challenges can be overcome with relevant and meaningful "policies, and procedures, accommodative infrastructure layouts, active engagement in building partnerships, creative fundraising and cost saving techniques, and an active public outreach effort to promote the program"⁴⁹. The following section offers some of the potential challenges and where relevant, proposed practice and policy solutions in response to concerns related to staff, residents, health and safety, legal and financial challenges.

Staff/Organizational Considerations	
Challenge	Practice and Policy Solutions
Use of staff time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Depending on which pet-sheltering option, staff time required should be minimal. Set clear practices and policies that clearly define staff and resident expectations regarding caring for the pet(s).
Lack of staff knowledge about links between violence against women and animal cruelty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer staff training. Partner with local animal shelter or other relevant partners to deliver training.
Lack of staff knowledge about pet-sheltering programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer staff training. Partner and/or connect with existing TH who run pet-sheltering programs to share knowledge and get buy in.
Creating and updating pet policies and procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reach out to other pet-sheltering programs to share policies. See policy templates and sample forms below Access BCSTH Policy Portal
Obtaining Board, management and staff support and approval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key staff championing the need for pet-sheltering program can provide evidence of links, the dangers faced by animals in an abusive household, the psychological and emotional needs of women, children, and pet(s), examples of successful pet programs and any other

⁴⁹ Praxis, Pet-friendly Shelters.

	<p>information required to foster conversation and get buy in among staff and Board.</p>
<p>Staff resistance; staff fears of dogs and/or other animals; staff allergies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide education and/or training on the links between animal cruelty and violence against women, the dangers faced by animals in an abusive household, the psychological and emotional needs of women, children, and pet(s), and how to care for pets who have been abused. Fetch Find and Fear Free Pets offer training opportunities. • Depending on the reason(s) for staff resistance (e.g., fear of large dogs, allergies) when possible, provide accommodations and/or exemptions from engaging with pets (i.e., during a pet room check the staff member is exempt). • Create policy that clearly outlines expectations of staff and that no staff member is expected to be in direct contact with any animals that they are uncomfortable with. • Consult with staff about allergies and offer to make accommodations for those staff that require it. • Have a crate(s) in the office for pets to be secured during intake. • Pet should ideally only have contact with select staff/volunteers, and the family.
<p>Lack of community partnerships, knowledge and training between Transition Housing programs, Animal Welfare Organizations, SPCAs and humane societies, and veterinary clinics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select staff who are keen to champion this issue to reach out, build relationships and coordinate cross sectoral training and partnerships.
<p>Limited resources, physical space and/or infrastructure of Transition Housing programs to accommodate pets and/or support pet-sheltering program</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If program opts to accommodate pets in resident rooms, no additional space is required. • For sheltering pets in indoor or outdoor kennels, apply for funding and actively seek out donations from Animal Welfare Organizations, SPCAs and humane societies, veterinary clinics, pet stores, and public to support renovating an existing structure or building a new one.

Practice Considerations	
Challenge	Practice and Policy Solutions
Pet noise and odors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It can be expected that from time-to-time there will be concerns about noise and odors. • If space permits, certain sections of the WTHSP site could be designated as pet-friendly, while other resident rooms and communal areas are located further away from the pet room(s). Try to create pet-friendly rooms in separate areas of the site, apart from other residents' rooms. • Deep clean between all residents' stays. • Select easy to clean and maintain furniture. Certain types of furniture or flooring will soak up scents more than others (e.g., carpet is less ideal than tile). • Require residents to sign a pet-sheltering agreement that outlines expectations related to care of their pet including keeping pet quiet (to the best of their ability), and keeping the room clean and odor free. • If noise becomes excessive, staff might need to consider housing the pet elsewhere, such as an Animal Welfare Organization.
Pet abandonment by resident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most women will not abandon their pet(s), but there may be instances where they are forced to because they cannot take care of the animal; they leave the WTHSP and do not come back, leaving the pet behind; or, the housing options available to them do not allow for pets. • Develop a policy for when pets are abandoned which is communicated to residents with pets upon intake. • Require residents to sign an agreement that would allow the TH to have legal ownership of the pet should the resident abandon them for a determined amount of time (e.g., 1 week). • Work with local partners to re-house the pet. • Situations when women leave but request that their pets remain behind should be handled on a case-by-case basis, since numerous factors may be involved. Have the outgoing residents sign an Extended Care Contract that outlines their stay for their pets.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In fostering situations, there should also be a contingency plan in case the woman does not reclaim the pet. • Follow the policy on abandoned pets should the woman fail to return to retrieve their pet at the agreed upon date.
<p>Hygiene concerns and/or concerns over property maintenance and property damage</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require residents to sign a pet-sheltering agreement that outlines expectations related to care of their pet while at the WTHSP site, including maintaining room cleanliness and picking up after their pet outside. • It is inevitable that some property damage will occur, especially when dealing with pets who are stressed due to living in a new environment. Have a contingency fund for such times.
<p>Lack of awareness of pet-sheltering options and resources among women experiencing abuse</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post information about the pet-sheltering program on WTHSP website, social media platforms and other promotional materials. • Ask women about pets and concerns about pet safety when initial inquiries are made about crisis support, as well as on intake, in risk assessments, and in safety planning. This will provide staff with more information and enable the staff person to provide relevant information and refer to relevant services. Asking a question about pet safety addresses a potential barrier to the woman's safety. • Ensure community partners such as Animal Welfare Organizations, SPCAs and humane societies, and veterinary clinics are aware of your pet-sheltering program.
<p>Caring for pets who are also recovering from violence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with local animal shelter or other relevant community organization to offer staff training on how to care for pets impacted by violence. Fetch Find and Fear Free Pets also offer training opportunities. • Provide information to residents with pets about the needs of pets who are stressed/anxious, and/or traumatized.
<p>The size, breed and number of pets allowed in</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide clear guidelines and policy on what types of animals, size, breed and number of animals are allowed in the WTHSP and the limitations of this. Most pet

<p>The Transition Housing program</p>	<p>programs house cats and dogs, and some accept reptiles, fish and small rodents, and facilitate placement for livestock and horses with local farms. There may be agencies such as farm animal sanctuaries, wildlife rehabilitation centers, or rescue groups that can be partnered with to accommodate livestock and larger animals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When deciding what pets to allow, consider the experience of the staff in working with animals, potential liability concerns, and the physical infrastructure of the WTHSP site. • Work with partners to identify solutions for sheltering pets who do not fall within the TH pet program mandate/guidelines. • Pets that are aggressive, ill or injured, may be better housed in partnering Animal Welfare Organizations. • Fostering or kenneling scenarios could last many months, depending on how long it takes to secure the resident and pet in permanent or long- term housing that can accept pets. A Memorandum of Understanding is helpful in these scenarios.
<p>Different styles of pet care</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As with mothering, there are many styles of pet parenting. Provide residents with guidance around expectations of pet care while staying at the WTHSP. • At intake and throughout their stay, ask residents if they require any support with pet care. • This may be particularly relevant for women with children as it may be difficult to stay in the room with their pet at all times and care for their children at the same time.
<p>Fear of particular animals and/or large dogs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform all women who call for services that the WTHSP is pet-friendly, and ask if they have any concerns so they can be best accommodated. • Define in policy what animals, species of animals and size are allowed. Most pet programs house cats and dogs, but some are housing reptiles and small rodents, and facilitating placement for livestock and horses. • For larger dogs, consider requiring they be leashed and muzzled while walking though common areas. This can assist in alleviating some fears and reduce the likeliness of accidental injury should a dog become startled and fearful.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When possible, keep pet-friendly rooms in a separate part of the WTHSP site. This may decrease the risk of interactions between pets and people who fear them. • Pet(s) should ideally only have contact with select staff/volunteers, and the family.
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Health and Safety Considerations	
Challenge	Practice and Policy Solutions
Safety concerns related to big dogs or certain pets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform all women who call for services that the WTHSP is pet-friendly, and ask them if they have any concerns so they can be best accommodated. • Define in policy what animals, species of animals and size are allowed. Most pet programs house cats and dogs and some accept reptiles and small rodents, and some also facilitate placement for livestock and horses. • When possible, keep pet-friendly rooms in a separate part of the WTHSP. This may decrease the risk of interactions between pets and people who fear them. • For larger dogs, consider requiring they be leashed and muzzled while walking through common areas. This can assist in alleviating some fears and reduce the likelihood of accidental injury should a dog become startled and fearful. • Prohibit animals from being in certain rooms, such as the kitchen, common areas, etc. to prevent unwanted contact between other residents, staff and the animal(s). • Separate entrances could also be used to reduce contact between pets and other residents and staff while pet is moving through the building. • Retain the right to deny pets at intake, when necessary, due to overcrowded conditions or if the pet's condition, temperament, behavior or other factors would compromise the health, safety or well-being of the residents or other animals. • Retain the right to ask the resident to find alternate accommodation for their pet, once their stay has commenced, if there are issues with the pet's temperament, behaviour or other factors that may compromise the health, safety or well-being of the residents or other animals. • Pet should ideally only have contact with select staff/volunteers, and the family.

<p>Allergies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allergies is one of the most commonly expressed concerns in regards to sheltering pets in the WTHSP sites, but there are many steps to mitigate potential issues. Outline these in policy. • Inform all women who enter the WTHSP that it is pet-friendly, and ask if they have any concerns so they can best be accommodated. • When space permits, designate certain rooms as pet-friendly rooms only. • Keep pet-friendly rooms in a separate part of the WTHSP site, when possible, to help decrease the risk of allergies or asthma. • Prohibit animals from being in certain rooms, such as the kitchen, common areas, etc. to prevent unwanted contact between other residents, staff and the pet(s). • Employ more extensive and/or more frequent cleaning to reduce allergens. • Replace carpeting with tile. To make it feel more like home, consider using throw rugs that are machine washable. • To segregate pet spaces, install mini split air systems in each room. It is a cost-effective way to separate the heating, ventilation and air conditioning in rooms. • In pet-free rooms, consider buying a portable HEPA Air Purifier. They are a very cost-effective solution for someone who struggles with allergies. • Washers and dryers can also trap pet allergens. Consider adding a separate washer and dryer that can be used by pet families. • Deep clean after pet families leave. Lavender scented cleaning products soothe both people and pets. • Consider at least a half-wall of Fiber Reinforce Plastic (FRP) wallboard in the pet friendly rooms to provide a highly cleanable surface.
<p>Animal bites</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform all women upon intake that the WTHSP is pet-friendly, and ask if they have any concerns so they can be best accommodated. • During pet intake, assess for aggressive and/or anti-social behaviours. • Teach staff and residents how to interact, or avoid interacting, with animals.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prohibit animals from being in certain rooms, such as the kitchen, common areas, etc. to prevent unwanted contact between other residents, staff and the animal(s). • For larger dogs, consider requiring they be leashed and muzzled while walking through common areas. This can assist in alleviating some fears and reduce the likelihood of accidental injury should a dog become startled and fearful. • Separate entrances could also be used to reduce contact while the pet is moving through the building. • Pets should ideally only have contact with select staff/volunteers, and the family.
Abused, Aggressive, or Stressed Pets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is common for animals that are entering a new environment to be stressed, and this stress may turn into aggression, especially if the pet was conditioned to behave this way through the abuse at home. • At pet intake, ask women to provide detailed information about the pet such as behaviour, temperament, and how the pet may react to being in a WTHSP site. This can help staff decide if sheltering the pet on site is suitable, or if the pet may be better suited in a kennel (either on-site or off-site). • Retain the right to deny pets, when necessary, if the animal's condition, temperament, behavior or other factors would compromise the health, safety or well-being of the residents or other animals. • If the pet is aggressive, they should be housed with a partnering Animal Welfare Organization.
Pet health and well being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask resident about pet health and well-being during pet intake and if there are any health concerns. • Discuss with residents the basic types of medical care and services provided through the WTHSP and partners. • Ideally incoming cats and dogs will have basic vaccinations and be parasite (i.e., fleas, worms) free. Work with community partners to get the pet's basic medical care needs met. • Residents are responsible for pet care including providing food and water, cleaning the cage or kennel daily, providing any medication, cleaning the litter box daily, walking the dog in a safe area designated by staff

	<p>and cleaning up after it, and notifying staff if a pet needs veterinary care.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pets should not be kept crated or kennelled 24/7. • Residents should formally sign and agree to pet care terms while at the WTHSP. • When necessary and appropriate staff can check in with pets when the residents are out by delegating authority to the appropriate staff. • Keep an accurate inventory of all pets that are entering and leaving the TH. • Ensure veterinary care is available when needed by forming partnerships with veterinarians and SPCAs, and maintaining frequent contact with them. • Maintain supplies for the pets. • Consider asking resident to provide veterinary records for each pet. • If veterinary records are not available, and resident is agreeable, work with veterinarian partner to get pet a check-up examination and any other pet medical care needs such as basic vaccinations, spaying/neutering, parasite treatment and emergency medical care. • Having veterinary records listing the resident as the caretaker/owner of the pet can be helpful if there are any disputes related to custody of the pet.
Confidentiality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When transporting the animal or sheltering it with an Animal Welfare Organization or fostering program, it is important that none of the woman or pets' information be divulged. • For animals that are in foster care, animal shelter or off-site kennel, it is recommended that the foster or kennel signs a confidentiality agreement and works with the resident to determine visitation based on their individual safety plan. • In foster, animal shelter or off-site kenneling scenarios, animal tags should not have identifying information of the woman such as a phone number. If possible, get new tags containing temporary contact information that reflects the publicly accessible information of the supporting WTHSP. • If pet is microchipped, be aware that women may want to change their private information and/or add a "do not

	<p>disclose” notice in the microchip database to maintain confidentiality.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When possible, visitations should be facilitated by program staff who transports the pet between the foster family and the resident. • For pets in foster care, shelter, or boarding kennel, it is recommended that there are written procedures in place for how they are returned to the owner. Ideally, the pet will be returned through the facilitation of the WTHSP staff, so that each party’s identity is kept confidential.
Safety and Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have safety plans and protocols in place to make sure that the staff, volunteers, residents, and pets are safe at all times. • If the pets are kept in a separate kennelling area, then only the staff and owners should be allowed to enter the facility. • Consider installing locks and security cameras in certain areas to protect the property, residents and pets from intruders and abusers.

Legal Considerations	
Challenge	Practice and Policy Solutions
Legal and regulatory issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The WTHSP should consult with a licensed legal representative prior to taking in pets to identify the applicable laws, regulations, and bylaws. • Some general legal considerations include local zoning, code enforcement, and health departments who can determine if the WTHSP will be required to have a kennel license to house pets on-site, or if special permits are needed to build outdoor kennels. • Whenever possible, WTHSP residents should bring legal proof of ownership/custody of the pet in order to avoid custody issues (such as city pet licenses, adoption paperwork from rescue or breeder, etc.). • See section below on legal, regulatory and insurance considerations.
Insurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Including pets in the WTHSP services provided introduces new risks that will have to be addressed with the WTHSP insurance carriers.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of insurance that are recommended includes Property Damage insurance, Liability insurance, and Workers Compensation insurance.
Legal risks of animal bites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform all residents upon intake that the WTHSP is pet-friendly and ask if they have any concerns. • Pet owning residents should sign a Pet-sheltering Agreement prior to staying in the WTHSP that outlines expectations regarding pet care and handling around other residents and staff. • Dogs should always be leashed when outside the room, and preferably wearing a muzzle to protect other residents from bites. • Cats and other small animals should be transported in a secured carrier. • Pet should ideally only have contact with select staff/volunteers, and the family.

Financial Considerations	
Challenge	Practice and Policy Solutions
Cost of adapting WTHSP sites to accommodate pet-sheltering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cost of establishing a pet-sheltering program will depend on which housing option is chosen. • The initial start-up costs will likely be more than on-going maintenance. Many of the existing programs indicate that they do not use funds from their general operating budget for pet housing and are funded by donations and community support. • Apply for funding. • Reach out to community partners and public for fundraising and donations.
Fundraising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage your community, especially those people and businesses who love animals. People who love animals and donate to animal causes will be a new donor opportunity for your WTHSP. • Connect with people who donate to animal causes and highlight that your WTHSP is helping to keep pets with their families and avoiding pets from being surrendered to an animal shelter.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertise that your WTHSP is pet-friendly and provide a wish list on your website of what you need to house pets. • When looking to raise money to purchase necessary items for your pet housing program, always ask for donated items or items at cost. • Ask your local Animal Welfare Organizations, SPCAs and humane societies, and veterinary clinics if they have donated supplies that are not being used, such as leashes, bowls, litter boxes, food, etc.. • Apply for grant funding for building your on-site pet-shelter and to help with veterinary and other costs.
<p>Lack of funds to buy supplies and other resources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reach out to local Animal Welfare Organizations, SPCAs and humane societies, veterinary clinics and pet stores for donations • Partner with local veterinarians to provide emergency and basic vet care, and other programs that assist with vet care (i.e., Paws for Hope, Vancouver Humane Society). • If donations aren't available, request items at cost such as for set up costs (outdoor or indoor kennel setup crates, carriers), outdoor dog run (fencing and ground cover), pet supplies (i.e., food, toys, litter etc.). • Many residents are happy to bring and use their own supplies.

Policy Recommendations

As highlighted in the previous section, there are a number of potential challenges that can hinder the development and success of a pet-sheltering program in your WTHSP site. However, creating clear policies and procedures and making these available to staff and residents is one of the ways programs can mitigate concerns and risks of staff and residents, protect itself from liability, and protect the health and wellbeing of all its residents, including pets.

Examples of program and practice elements that should be addressed in policies and procedures in advance of implementing the pet-sheltering program include:

- expectations of staff and residents regarding caring for, and interacting with, the pet(s);
- types and sizes of pets allowed on premises;
- handling of abused, aggressive, or stressed pets;
- responsibility of caring for pets;
- animal noise, allergies, and odor;
- health, safety and security of all staff, residents and pets;
- confidentiality of residents; abandoned pets; and,
- returning pets to owners if placed in foster care, shelter, or boarding kennels.

Sample policy templates can be found in [Appendix C](#).

Organizational Assessment

Prior to starting a pet-sheltering program, it can be helpful for the WTHSP to do an organizational assessment. This would include reviewing and exploring the following⁵⁰:

- **Staffing Requirements:**
 - No additional staff are required to accommodate pets within the WTHSP, but existing staff roles would have to expand for considerations such as:
 - Keeping track of pets coming into and out of the shelter, managing pet-friendly areas in shelters, obtaining access to veterinary care, obtaining supplies and medications as necessary, ensuring that all residents understand the pet policies and are following them, ensuring that the rooms, crates, kennels, etc. are thoroughly cleaned between use.
 - Staff time would be required to build and maintain relationships with community partners such as Animal Welfare Organizations, SPCA's and humane societies, and veterinarians as well as pet fostering programs.
- **Physical Infrastructure Requirements:**
 - The physical infrastructure requirements for a pet-sheltering program depends on the type of program the WTHSP chooses to implement.
 - The option of in-room pet-sheltering requires little to no infrastructure building or renovating. Minor changes to rooms may be required, such as replacing carpet with a hard-surfaced flooring.
 - Indoor kenneling may require some renovations to an existing indoor space to accommodate pets. This may be done in a spare room that is large enough to house multiple animals or in the basement. The space should have dividers between the dog cages to prevent distress or aggression between animals, and prey animals such as cats, rodents, and other small creatures should be kept in a separate area.
 - On-site outdoor kennelling will require the most significant investment into infrastructure because it will require the construction of a new building on the property (unless you are renovating an existing garage), as well as heating, cooling, and air circulation/filtration systems, while also following a similar layout to the indoor kennelling option. There are also a variety of supplies, such as food, that the WTHSP will need to store and maintain on-hand.
 - Regardless of which pet-sheltering model is followed, a WTHSP may want to consider having a wash station available for pet owners to bathe their animals, as it is not acceptable to wash animals in the same bathtubs that humans bathe in. If there is not space available for a washing station, alternative arrangements could be made to have pets groomed for little to no cost (assuming the WTHSP

⁵⁰ This section was adapted, with permission, from Praxis Consulting. (October 23, 2021). Pet-friendly shelter viability report. Saskatchewan SPCA, PATHS, and STOPS to Violence.

https://www.violencelink.ca/files/ugd/f9f2f2_4568d7e4028e47f6a854d7e0a97cc288.pdf

can arrange discounted services with a community partner or can subsidize part of the cost to the resident).

- WTHSP should carry supplies on-hand to aid in the care for pets. Most supplies can be obtained through donations, and partnerships with local animal shelters, SPCAs, veterinarians, and pet stores. Allie Phillips lays out several items in her SAF-T program⁵¹ that a program may consider acquiring:
 - dry and canned food for dogs and cats;
 - kitten and puppy formula;
 - formula bottles;
 - metal food and water bowls;
 - collars and leashes;
 - chew toys;
 - cleaning solution for rooms, cages, crates, or kennels;
 - cat litter;
 - litter box and scoopers;
 - cat toys;
 - ID tags;
 - transportation carriers;
 - pet beds, towels and blankets for pets to lay on;
 - cat scratching post
 - grooming products; and,
 - basic medical supplies, such as flea or parasite medicine.
- **Financial Analysis:**
 - Prior to developing a pet-friendly sheltering program, the WTHSP should consider its finances, such as revenue sources for funding the program, partnerships the program can leverage for supplies and resources, estimated cost of supplies, capacity to intake pets (i.e., how many and what types of pets can be supported at any given time), costs of emergency procedures on animals, and most importantly, which model of the pet-sheltering program you would like to implement. The model of pet-sheltering that is chosen will have a significant impact on the cost of the program. See breakdown of cost in the above section [Options for Sheltering Pets](#).
 - An on-site in resident room(s) pet-sheltering option is the most cost-effective option, as this will require few, if any, renovations to the current infrastructure.
 - Estimated costs from [PATHS Pet Friendly Shelter Viability Report](#) are:
 - approximately \$360.00 per animal in start-up costs to purchase key supplies such as kennels/crates, toys, leashes, and other non-consumable items.
 - monthly average variable cost per pet will be approximately \$40 for both dogs and cats, which includes consumable goods such as

⁵¹ Phillips, A. (2020). Sheltering Animals & Families Together: SAF-T Program Start Up Manual (Manual).

kibble and wet food, as well as non-reusable items such as cat litter and dog waste bags.

- The option of on-site kennelling (indoor and outdoor) will also include these same start-up costs and ongoing variable expenses, but will also face additional expenses related to renovating the existing infrastructure, or building completely new infrastructure. These additional costs can range from a few thousand dollars, to over \$100,000 in some cases for more elaborate external kenneling structures.
- **Potential Funding Sources:**
 - When looking for financial support in accommodating pets, a shelter can look to community donations, government grants, private organization grants, sponsorships, and community-based fundraising drives.
 - Allie Phillips of SAF-T believes that once you open up your WTHSP to pets, you open the door to a large group of donors who may not have previously donated to your program. Be sure to advertise that your WTHSP is pet-friendly.
- **Legal & Regulatory Analysis:**
 - It is highly recommended that the WTHSP consult with a licensed legal representative prior to taking in pets to identify the applicable laws, regulations, and bylaws. This will help to ensure that all legal requirements are met.
 - Some general legal considerations include local zoning, code enforcement, and health departments who can determine if the WTHSP will be required to have a kennel license to house pets on-site, or if special permits are needed to build outdoor kennels. It is advisable to determine beforehand whether a special permit is needed to build outdoor kennels, if that option is preferred.
 - WTHSP should consult with local health regulators to ensure having pets on-site does not violate any health regulations, and should inform them of the zones within the site that animals are not allowed in, such as the kitchen.
 - It is recommended that the WTHSP acquaint themselves with [The Prevention to Cruelty of Animals Act](#) and provide staff with the key information they need to know to adequately care for pets in accordance with the law.
 - Whenever possible, WTHSP residents should bring legal proof of ownership/custody of the pet in order to avoid custody issues (such as city pet licenses, adoption paperwork from rescue or breeder, etc.).
- **Insurance⁵²**
 - Including pets in the existing services provided introduces new risks that will have to be addressed with the WTHSP insurance carriers. Finding coverage has proven to be challenging for some WTHSP. If this proves to be the case, then reach out to an insurance provider that specializes in animal shelter policies. Be

⁵² This section is adapted from Red Rover & Greater Good Charities. (2021). Don't forget the pets: housing people & pets in crisis: training handbook. Don't forget the pets. <https://dontforgetthepets.org/training-handbook/>

aware that some insurance carriers may refuse to provide insurance for certain pets and may have breed restrictions. When negotiating insurance coverage, note with the insurer that:

- only the family and designated staff will interact with the pets; and
 - if a pet arrives that is aggressive or too stressed, your partner animal welfare organization is on standby to take the pet.
- Property Damage insurance is encouraged if the WTHSP does not already hold it. This will cover the business's building(s), equipment and inventory. Pets can cause damage, so when talking to your insurance company be sure to tell them if you plan to use enhanced building materials for pets and how you plan to care for the pets to make them happy and therefore less destructive.
 - Consult with your WTHSP liability insurance carrier to determine if the existing policy will cover residents and staff who are injured by pets (e.g., bites) housed on-site. The WTHSP may need to add an insurance rider (or, special provision) to the policy to address pets on the property.
 - Most organizations carry General Liability insurance, which covers medical and other costs incurred if your organization faces a lawsuit. Your insurance company will want to know what protocols and training you are requiring to help mitigate exposure and risks that might end in a lawsuit.
 - Workers Compensation insurance will pay for medical costs if an employee is injured on the job, as well as income lost while they recover from those injuries. Jobs that carry less risk will typically have lower policy premiums. Insurance companies will want to know what you are doing to lower exposure to risky situations and what training will be provided to employees who cannot avoid risky situations.

Next Steps and Critical Success Factors⁵³

Get to Know your Community Needs:

- Determine pet-sheltering needs. Assess your community needs or use findings from [Don't Forget the Pets](#) (2021), which estimates that about 10% of people (1 out of 10 families) accessing a shelter will have pets, though some areas are as high as 30%. Ask other local groups, including both human services and animal welfare organizations about their experience with pets of people in crisis.
- Assess potential partners and resources in your community. Collaboration is key.

Plan/Get Buy-in:

- Keep it simple. It's okay to start small. For example, will you first only consider traditional house pets such as cats and dogs, and then expand your program to include other animals such as smaller animals, reptiles, fish, or livestock.
- Determine the best pet-sheltering program for your organization and community and establish timelines.
- Discuss and resolve pet-sheltering program barriers.
- Identify one or two staff persons to champion the program. Ideally, a Program Director will take on the responsibility for overseeing the program's start-up and ongoing operations.
- Establish a pet-sheltering program annual budget.
- Create a fundraising strategy. Building strong relationships with donors is important for maintaining the pet-sheltering program and ensuring the WTHSP has the necessary pet supplies. Seek financial support from the community to assist with initial start-up costs such as supplies and capital to make necessary changes to the infrastructure.
- Create a backup plan in case your primary pet housing plan isn't a great fit for a pet or if you are at capacity.
- Consult with a lawyer about applicable laws, regulations, and bylaws of housing pets.
- Discuss health and safety considerations and obtain any necessary permits.
- Develop pet-sheltering policies and practices. Share with staff, volunteers, and make available to all residents.
- If needed, consult with local handyman/contractor for build/renovation.
- Educate staff and residents about the program, why it's important; new guidelines, practice and policies; the importance of the human-animal bond in healing; animal care best practices; animal behavior basics; how to understand pet behaviors and actions; animal body language (especially dogs and cats); and, first aid for pets.
- Promote the program to the community through social media and the WTHSP website. Provide informational pamphlets and offer information sessions to community partners such as RCMP, municipal police, veterinarians, and Animal Welfare Organizations, SPCA's, humane societies, and pet stores.

⁵³ This section was adapted, with permission, from Praxis Consulting. (October 23, 2021). Pet-friendly shelter viability report. Saskatchewan SPCA, PATHS, and STOPS to Violence.

https://www.violencelink.ca/files/ugd/f9f2f2_4568d7e4028e47f6a854d7e0a97cc288.pdf

Networks and Partnerships:

- Connect, build and maintain strategic partnerships with a variety of organizations in order to run a successful pet-sheltering program, primarily Animal Welfare Organizations; SPCA's and humane societies, veterinarians, pet stores, livestock protection organizations & farmers; financial institutions and other funding bodies; and, philanthropic resources.
- Develop [Memorandums of Understanding](#) across partners.
- Collaboration is key in order to accommodate a pet-sheltering program, especially in areas with limited access to resources.
- Coordinate cross training across sectors. Ongoing training with collaborative partners will go a long way in supporting people and pets in your community.
- Develop materials showcasing the program for both partners and the public to spread awareness about the link between violence against women and animal maltreatment and to garner support for pet-sheltering programs.
- Establish a relationship with a licensed veterinarian for a successful on-site pet housing program, to serve as a resource, and to provide routine and emergency medical care to any pets housed on-site.
 - Ideally partner with a veterinarian who will provide on-site pro-bono services to the pets. This may include a basic physical examination, parasite treatment, vaccinations, grooming, nail clippings, and simple medications. For more extensive care requiring the pet to be treated at the veterinary clinic, ask for discounted services since your clients may not have funds to pay for services. These services may include repairing injuries, treating illnesses, x-rays, and spay/neuter services.
 - A vet can also provide an expert opinion in court should the need arise to verify animal cruelty.

Communication with Residents

- From the initial crisis call to a resident's departure, ensure clear and ongoing communications with all residents about the pet-sheltering programs, guidelines and expectations. This can include:
 - What is expected of residents with pets and what they can expect from WTHSP staff.
 - Who is responsible for caring for the pets and what does care look like (i.e., feeding, walking, cleaning etc....)?
 - Where pets are allowed and not allowed and who can interact with them. Most programs only allow the pet's family and designated staff to interact with the pet. However, in some programs other residents offer pet sitting after completing a consent form.
 - What resources and other supports are available for residents and pets through partnerships (i.e., vet care).
 - Other pet-sheltering options if the pet isn't adapting well to living in the WTHSP site.

- Be prepared to be flexible and adaptive.

Evaluate your program

- It is important to evaluate your program to determine what is working and what is not and if there are any needed changes. It will also provide data and the “story” for funding applications and grants and to share with supporters and stakeholders.
- Data from pet-sheltering programs can build community and donor support and demonstrate the need for such programs, supporting future funding.

Conclusion

There is ample evidence highlighting the benefits of offering pet-sheltering programs in WTHSP sites for women and their pets experiencing violence. Depending on the best fit for your organization, pet-sheltering programs can be relatively inexpensive to start-up, many liability issues can be mitigated with proper policies, and partnerships and collaboration can assist in the program's success. We hope that this toolkit provides clarity and guidance about the options available to the WTHSP and ways to proceed in implementing your own pet-sheltering program to assist women and their pets in accessing safety and healing.

Appendix A: Resources

Pet-sheltering Guides	
<u>Don't Forget the Pets: Housing People and Pets in Crisis</u>	Comprehensive information about the what and the why of a pet-sheltering program for Domestic Violence shelters, including details on specific design ideas and considerations.
<u>PATHS Pet Friendly Shelter Viability Report</u>	A comprehensive report exploring the feasibility of creating pet-friendly shelters throughout Saskatchewan for the survivors of intimate partner violence. This project was undertaken to determine whether Saskatchewan IPV shelters could become pet-friendly environments to reduce the barriers for survivors of IPV in ensuring their pet's safety. Sample forms and policies can be found on pages 69 – 89.
<u>Pet Safety and Women: Options for women with pets leaving abusive situations</u>	Information on Ontario's SafePet program and other options available to Women's Shelters in supporting women and their pets.
<u>BC Housing Design Guidelines for Women's Safe Homes, Transition Houses, Second Stage Housing and Long-Term Rental Housing</u>	A BC Housing guide to assist development teams with the planning, and design processes for upgrading existing buildings or constructing new buildings that are to be used for the women's safe homes, transition houses, second stage housing and long-term rental housing. Provides guidance around the building of pet-friendly spaces and shelters.

British Columbia Specific Resources	
<u>Paws For Hope</u>	Paws for Hope strives to shift the culture of companion animal welfare in BC by creating new models of practice and remediating underlying causes of harm through cross sector collaboration, education and advocacy.

	<p>Paws for Hope runs the program No Pet Left Behind, which provides temporary safe care for pets of individuals who are in crisis, including escaping violence—creating safety for people and their pets.</p>
BC SPCA	<p>In addition to collaborating with other enforcement agencies, the BC SPCA provides free emergency pet boarding for individuals fleeing unsafe home environments. The BC SPCA is developing an expanded foster network to care for pets to ensure that those seeking to leave a violent relationship have a temporary safe haven for their animals.</p>
Vancouver Humane Society	<p>The Vancouver Humane Society offers veterinary assistance funding to women who are fleeing violence through two programs:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>The McVitie Fund</i>, which provides emergency financial assistance to low-income pet guardians whose pets are experiencing a medical emergency that they are unable to afford to treat (i.e., critical illnesses, life-threatening injuries). 2. <i>Helping Women & Pets in Crisis</i>, which covers the full costs of preventative pet care for women who do not have permanent housing or who are housing insecure. This includes spays, neuters, shots, and deworming. VHS launched this program recognizing that many WTHSP sites who accept pets require the pet to be neutered, vaccinated, and/or defleaed to stay with their guardian. Since many women fleeing violence are not able to afford this care, <i>Helping Women & Pets in Crisis</i> exists to fully fund this care to increase access to safe housing. <p>Both of these programs recognize the importance of the human-companion animal bond and the psychological and financial trauma that is caused to both when a guardian is unable to afford necessary veterinary care.</p> <p>For more information or to access support, please contact Brooklyn at 604-336-1390 or support@vancouverhumanesociety.bc.ca.</p>
Funding Opportunities	<p>Civil Forfeiture Grant Compassion in Action Fund, Vancouver Foundation Warm Hearts Pet Safe Havens Community Gaming Grants Pet Valu Companions for Change Grants</p>

Other Helpful Websites	
<u>Safe Place for Pets website</u>	A website that lists on-site and off-site housing for people and pets who need a safe escape from domestic violence in the US and Canada.
<u>Sheltering Animals and Families Together (SAF-T)</u>	A global initiative helping domestic violence shelters to create on-site pet housing for families fleeing violence. The SAF-T manual, available upon request <u>here</u> , provides guidance about how to start a pet-sheltering program, examples of different pet-sheltering programs and sample forms.
<u>Animal and Interpersonal Abuse Research Group</u>	Based at the University of Windsor, AIPARG is comprised of faculty and graduate students across disciplines who conduct research on the intersection of abuse against people and animals. AIPARG aims to understand the co-occurrence of animal and interpersonal violence and advocate for change in policy and practice to better address the needs of those affected by abuse – human and animal alike.
<u>Sask SPCA</u>	An informative website as part of a province-wide initiative to provide research-based information on the link between violence against women and animal cruelty, as well as resources for women and professionals in the human and animal services sectors. The website offers extensive information, videos and brochures about the link between animal abuse and domestic violence, including how to include pets in safety planning and how to recognize and report suspected abuse.
<u>Sheltering Animals and Families Together Webinar</u>	A webinar by SAF-T on developing a pet-sheltering program.
<u>Don't Forget the Pets</u>	A website dedicated to supporting organizations to shelter humans and pets in crisis. Their document library offers example forms and documents from their partner organizations that can be adapted.

Appendix B: Sample Forms

The following sample forms⁵⁴ have been prepared as guidance for a WTHSP developing a pet-sheltering program. They include:

- Resident Intake form
- Pet Phone Assessment
- Pet Intake form
- Pet-sheltering Agreement
- Partner Memorandum of Understanding
- Consent and Release for Pet-sheltering
- Consent and Release for Boarding
- Pet Extended Care Contract
- Resident Evaluation

These forms can be tailored to reflect the type of pet-sheltering program you are implementing, to complement existing policies and procedures in your WTHSP site and to comply with your local laws.

⁵⁴ The sample forms provided have been adapted from multiple sources including the [SAF-T](#) manual and [Don't Forget the Pets Document Library](#).

Resident Intake Form

The information gathered in this Intake Form is intended to help us better assist you and your family while you reside at _____ (*name of WTHSP site*). The information provided will not be shared with anyone outside the agency except for emergency purposes.

Resident Information

Name: _____ Date of arrival: _____

Address: _____

Preferred language: _____

Interpreter needed: ___ Yes ___ No

If we need to contact you, what is the safest number to reach you?

Telephone: _____ day _____ evening

To ensure your privacy, program staff will not initiate conversations or contact you outside of the program. We leave that to your discretion.

Children Information

Child/ren's name / Date of Birth / Care Card No. / Health Concerns

If applicable, name of child/ren not with you at the Transition House

Do you and your partner share guardianship of your child/ren? Yes No

What, if any, agreements or court orders do you have relating to your child/ren?

Please provide any copies of any agreements or court orders regarding your child/ren.

Pet Information

Do you have pets and/or an assistance animal? Yes No

If yes, what kinds of pets and how many do you have?

Is your assistance animal and/or pet(s) with you? Yes No
If yes, see Pet Intake Form.

If no, do you have a safe place for your pets at this time? Yes No
Explain pet-sheltering options available if needed.

Medical Information

Do you have any medical or special needs that you feel it would be helpful for us to know about so that we can be of most support to you? (e.g., accessibility, medications, allergies, dietary concerns)? Yes No

If yes, please provide details about how we can best support you during your stay at the Transition House.

Health Care Provider's Name(s) and contact information:

Emergency contact name and information:

Citizenship Status

We support all women regardless of citizenship status. How would you describe your status?

Citizenship status: _____ Date of landing/arrival: _____

If relevant:

Sponsored by: _____ Years of sponsorship: _____

Legal Information

Are legal proceedings underway or expected? Yes No

Can you provide any copies of any court orders or agreements? Yes No

Referrals Checklist

Housing	Sheltering of pet(s) and/or livestock
Support	Legal Information
Safety Planning	Educational Information
Employment information	Income Assistance
Other	

Pet Phone Assessment

This form is intended for staff to assess and determine the suitability of potential pets coming to reside at _____ (WTHSP site).

Allowable Pets

- (list allowable pets – species, breeds, size)

Prohibited Pets

- (list prohibited pets - species, breeds, size)

Phone assessment by: _____ Date: _____

Assessment Questions

1. Name of pet owner:

2. Are you the primary owner of the pet(s) that require shelter? Yes No

3. What types of pet(s) do you have? Please provide some information about your pet(s) (i.e., dog breed, size, behaviour challenges, health issues, medications, special diets).

4. Is the pet a guide, service animal or therapy pet? Yes No

5. If yes, do you have documentation that confirms this? Yes No

6. Do you fear for the safety of your pet(s)? Yes No

7. Has your pet(s) been a victim of abuse or in danger of being harmed? Yes No

8. Has anyone threatened to harm your pet(s)? Yes No

9. If your pet(s) cannot stay here, do you have alternate arrangements or a place where they could stay? Yes No

10. Does your pet(s) have ticks, fleas or mites? Yes No

11. If yes, how are you treating it? _____

12. How do you think your pet(s) will do living in a new environment?

13. Has your pet(s) ever displayed aggression towards, or bitten, children, adults or other animals?

Yes No

14. If yes, please describe the circumstances.

15. Is there any other important information that you would like to share?

Staff

Pet accepted? Yes No

If yes, explain pet-sheltering program, pet agreement and requirements for arrival at the WTHSP (e.g., dogs/cats must be spayed/neutered, cats/dogs must receive health check and vaccinations, prophylactic treatment for fleas, kept in cage or kennel during intake, dogs on leash and muzzled while moving through common areas etc.).

If possible, encourage caller to bring pet needs to the WTHSP site such as: toys, bedding, leashes, collars, food, treats, medications, record of vaccinations, proof of spay/neuter, and cats preferred litter.

Pet Intake Form

The information gathered in this Intake Form are intended to help us better assist you and your pets while you reside at _____ (*name of WTHSP site*). The information provided will not be shared with anyone outside the agency except for emergency purposes.

Resident Information

Name of resident: _____

Date of arrival: _____ Phone number: _____

Pet(s) name: _____ Species/breed: _____

Age: _____ Gender: _____

Emergency contact name/phone number: _____

Name and contact info of Veterinarian: _____

Is it safe for _____ (*name of WTHSP site*) staff to contact your veterinarian to obtain records on your pet(s)? Yes No

Pet History

Is this a service animal, emotional support animal, or therapy animal? Yes No
If yes, please specify and describe services provided.

Has your pet(s) been threatened or harmed? Yes No
If yes, please describe. _____

If yes, how has this impacted your pets' behavior?

Did the threats or abuse towards your pet(s) impact your decision to come into (*WTHSP Site name*) sooner? Yes No
If yes, please describe. _____

Pet Behaviours

List any of your pet(s)' behavior issues (i.e., excessive noise, aggression, fearful of strangers, separation anxiety, etc.). _____

How has your pet(s) been housed at your home and where did they sleep? (i.e., crate-trained, indoor/outdoor pets, outdoor only pets, etc.)?

Is your pet(s) house-trained/litter-box trained? Yes No
If no, describe what accommodations are needed.

How does your pet(s) interact with other animals?
Please explain.

Has your pet(s) been aggressive towards other animals or humans? Yes No
If yes, describe the circumstances.

Has your pet(s) bitten anyone? Yes No
If yes, describe the circumstances.

What kind of food does your pet(s) normally eat?

What is your pet's usual routine?

Do you have any concerns about your pet(s) staying at (WTHSP site)? Yes No
If yes, please describe.

Pet Medical History

Does your pet(s) have any medical conditions? Yes No

If yes, please describe the ailments and current treatment.

Are your pet(s)' vaccinations up-to-date? Yes No

If no, list the vaccinations that need updating.

Is your pet(s) spayed/neutered? Yes No

Does your pet(s) need any immediate veterinary care? Yes No

If yes, please describe.

Has your cat(s) been tested for feline leukemia and FIV? Yes No

Results and date:

Has your dog(s) been tested for heartworm? Yes No

Results and date:

Has your pet(s) received flea/tick/parasite prevention treatment? Yes No

Have you brought your pet(s)' food, collars, litter box and/or medication with you? Yes No

If no, what supplies or care can we provide during your stay?

Do you have ownership papers such as vet records, adoption or purchase documentation?

Yes No

If so, please provide a copy.

Any other information you want to share with us about your pet(s)?

Pet-sheltering Agreement

Resident's name: _____ Intake date: _____

Name of pet(s): _____

The _____ (*name of WTHSP site*) agrees to accept from the above-named resident ("Resident") the following pets into the (*name of WTHSP site*) for safe housing:

Type of pet(s) & breed: _____

Age of pet(s): _____ Gender: _____ Weight: _____

Anticipated length of sheltering pet(s): _____

Spayed/Neutered: Yes _____ No _____ Vaccinations up to Date: Yes: _____ No: _____

Fleas/Ticks: Yes _____ No _____

The pet(s) listed above are allowed to stay at no cost until the resident has obtained pet-friendly housing or until the resident has made other arrangements for the pet(s). If needed, vaccinations and/or a medical examination can be provided to resident's pet(s) by _____ (*insert name of partnering agency/veterinarian*). If the resident's pet(s) require immediate medical care upon entry to the (*WTHSP site name*), or during their stay, due to injury or illness, the resident will be responsible for the cost of services provided. However, we have secured _____ (*insert information about partnerships and any pro-bono or reduced rates of veterinary care*).

The resident agrees to the following in caring for their pet(s) while staying at _____ (*WTHSP site name*):

Pet Care

- You are solely responsible for your pet(s) at all times. Residents must attend to the care of their pet(s), including providing appropriate food, water, daily exercise, hygiene, scooping/changing of litter, cleaning cages and/or crates or outdoor kennel and playtime.
 - Talk with staff if you need assistance with food, grooming, veterinary care and any supplies.
- Be respectful of other residents who may not welcome the presence of a family pet or may have allergies to your pet. Pets must remain in specified areas within the _____ (*WTHSP site name*) property. Pets are prohibited _____ (*Define parameters of where pets can and can't go*).

- You are responsible for the health of your pet. All pets must be free of foul odour and fleas. If needed, provision of grooming assistance may be available.
- If your pet causes a disturbance (e.g., frequently barks, meows, chirps etc., at a noise level that be heard outside your room) or damage (e.g., clawing, digging) or is otherwise disruptive, staff will work with you to determine possible solutions or adjustments that could be made to avoid disturbing other residents. Problems that persist may result in needing to find alternate accommodation for your pet.
- If you need to leave the _____ (*WTHSP site name*) and are unable to take your pet(s) with you please inform the staff. Please do not leave your pet(s) unattended for any longer than:
 - Dogs:
 - In indoor or outdoor kennel - maximum 4 hours.
 - In bedroom crate - maximum 4 hours.
 - No overnight absence.
 - Dog must be kennelled or crated when owner is off-site.
 - Cats
 - In indoor or outdoor kennel - maximum 9 hours.
 - In bedroom – 9 hours. If aggressive or escapist must be caged.
 - No overnight absence.
 - Rodents, reptiles, fish, etc.
 - In cage/aquarium.
 - Overnight absence ok.
- If you do not return to the _____ (*WTHSP site name*) within _____ (*define length of time e.g., 24 hours*), we will consider that you are abandoning your pet. If these circumstances occur, you agree that the ownership of the pet has been relinquished to _____ (*WTHSP site name*) and that we will work with our partners to place the pet for fostering or adoption and that you forfeit all legal rights to the pet.
- Upon departure from the _____ (*WTHSP site name*), you must take your pet(s) with you. If you are unable to do so, talk to staff so that we may assist you in making arrangements for your pet. Pets who do not accompany their owner upon departure, or whose owner has left them unattended on site for longer than the stated guidelines will be considered abandoned and _____ (*WTHSP site name*) will work with their partners to rehouse the pet(s).

Medical Care

- If your pet requires immediate medical care upon entry to the _____ (*WTHSP site name*) or during the pets' stay, notify staff immediately. You may be responsible for the cost of any medical care that the veterinarian provides.
- When possible, provide a copy of your pet's current vaccination records within 48 hours of arrival. If your pet is not current on vaccinations, please notify staff so that we may assist you in getting them.

Safety

- For the safety of your pet(s) and other residents, access to pets is limited to specifically designated and trained staff and volunteers, and the resident who owns the pet(s). There will be no interaction between the pet(s) and other residents. If there is contact between the pet and co-residents, this must be off-site.
- Entry to the house with your pet is only through _____ (*Define access points*).
- Pets are not permitted in the common areas (e.g., kitchen, food storage, dining room, living room).
- Your pet is only allowed in your designated bedroom or designated kennel area. Please keep the door closed.
- Pets known to have aggressive behaviour with humans or other pets must be muzzled or crated when entering and leaving the property.
- If a pet is staying at _____ (*WTHSP site name*) and subsequently is determined to be too stressed or have inappropriate behaviours, then staff will work with you to transfer your pet to a partner Animal Welfare Organization for a set period of foster care.
- In the case of an emergency at the _____ (*WTHSP site name*), pets are the responsibility of their owner.

Outdoor Exercise

- Pets may be off-leash in designated areas for exercise. You must immediately pick up any pet waste or messes inside and outside the property and properly dispose of it.
- You must supervise and retain full control of your pet at all times.

If any of these policies are violated during your stay, _____ (*WTHSP site name*) has the right to require you to find alternative placement for your pet.

Please be advised that _____ (*WTHSP site name*) or the _____ (*partnering agency*) may be required to report animal abuse to the appropriate law enforcement authorities, including providing any veterinary records supplied or produced as a result of the resident's pet(s) staying at the _____ (*WTHSP site name*). These records may be provided to law enforcement or to the prosecutor's office for use in court, if animal cruelty charges arise.

Waiver of Release and Indemnification

The resident agrees to release, discharge and hold harmless _____ (*WTHSP site name*), its' directors, officers, employees and agents from any and all damages, injury, claims, complaints, costs or expenses, causes of action, demands, and actions of every

kind and nature whatsoever, both known and unknown, arising out of or connected to the housing of the resident's pet(s) at _____ (*WTHSP site name*).

The resident has received, read and agreed to comply with this pet-sheltering agreement.

Resident Signature

Date

Staff Signature

Date

Staff, please provide residents with a printed copy of this agreement.

Partner Memorandum of Understanding

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU):

Between

(WTHSP Name)

And

(Partnering Animal Welfare Organization)

_____ [WTHSP site name] and _____ [Animal Welfare Organization (AWO)] enter into this MOU concerning the care, support and fostering of pets of residents staying at _____ [WTHSP site name].

This agreement is contingent on available space and resources at _____ [AWO].

Roles and Responsibilities

_____ [AWO] agrees to provide:

- Appropriate foster or in-shelter care for pets that the WTHSP is unable to house on-site. _____ [WTHSP] may transfer pets to _____ [AWO] due to lack of space, specialized needs of pets or larger pets that cannot be accommodated.
- During the pets' stay at _____ [AWO] or in a foster home, the following care will be provided at no cost to the WTHSP.
 - Clean housing and fresh water daily or as needed.
 - Nutritious and appropriate food such as that provided to other shelter animals. A special diet can be provided on request and at the expense of the owner (or with food provided by the owner).
 - Place the pets in the non-adoption area for protection and safety.
 - Daily dog walking. Regular exercise in foster home.
 - Preventive vaccinations if the pet is not up-to-date, including: *[list vaccinations that are required]*.
 - *[List any other pro-bono care provided.]*
- For pets being housed at the [WTHSP], _____ *[list medical care that is available at no cost e.g., vaccines, flea treatment, spay/neutering, food and supplies etc.]* will also be provided by _____ [AWO].

- If the pet requires emergency medical care, or any other medical care not listed above, the services will be provided and billed to the owner according to _____ [AWO] fee schedule.

_____ [WTHSP] agrees to:

- Making requests for pet-sheltering via phone or email to _____ [AWO] with as much notice as possible, and acknowledges that the _____ [AWO] reserves the right to defer to other housing options for aggressive pets.
- Arrange transportation of pet to the AWO.
- Provide periodic public acknowledgement of the contributions of _____ [AWO] to _____ [WTHSP] residents.

For security reasons, residents may not visit their pets at _____ [AWO] unless prior approval has been granted, but they may call to check on their pets during regular office hours. The pet owner will be required to execute a Consent and Release form before the pet is transferred to _____ [AWO] for care. The original will be kept on file at _____ [AWO] with a copy on file at _____ [WTHSP]. The agreement will be for a maximum of 30 days, but may be extended upon the agreement of all parties.

This MOU:

- Will take effect upon signing by both parties
- May be amended at any time only by written agreement signed by both parties
- Will continue at the agreement of both parties
- May be cancelled by either party in writing at any time.

Should there be a misunderstanding of this MOU, the signing agencies shall meet to clarify the terms of the agreement.

Name of WTHSP and Staff Signature

Date

Name of Animal Welfare Org and Staff Signature

Date

Consent and Release for Pet-sheltering

This form ensures the WTHSP has obtained consent and release to: provide veterinary care for pets in emergencies; and, to transfer ownership should the pet(s) be abandoned by the resident.

Resident's Name: _____ Intake Date: _____

Name of Pet(s): _____

Resident Phone Number: _____

I, _____ (*name of resident*), am the owner, or agent for the owner, of the animal(s) listed above and have the authority to give this consent. I understand that my pet(s) will be sheltered at _____ (*WTHSP site name*) so long as I am a resident. Upon my departure, I must make arrangements within 24 hours to retrieve my pet. If I fail to retrieve my pet by the time established in this contract and have failed to make alternative arrangements that I am relinquishing my pet to _____ (*WTHSP site name*), and that the pet(s) may be turned over to animal protective services.

Any costs incurred for medical care is the responsibility of the pet owner. If emergency medical attention is required, staff or volunteers may contact emergency medical services for my pet(s). If my pet is on medication for an existing condition, I agree to provide that medication to _____ (*WTHSP site name*).

_____ (*WTHSP site name*) are not responsible for the care of my pet(s) during my stay at _____ (*WTHSP site name*). I, as the pet owner, am responsible for meeting their needs. If I am unable to do so, staff may require me to find other housing for my pet(s).

Resident Signature

Date

WTHSP Staff Signature

Date

Consent and Release for Boarding

This form ensures the boarder (Animal Welfare Organization or private) has obtained consent and release to: provide veterinary care for pets in emergencies; and, to transfer ownership should the pet(s) be abandoned by the resident.

Resident's name: _____ Intake date: _____

Resident phone number: _____

Emergency contact/phone number: _____

Name of pet(s): _____

Type of pet(s) & breed: _____

Age of pet(s): _____ Gender: _____ Weight: _____

Special needs: _____

Veterinarian name/contact information: _____

Anticipated length of time boarding pet(s): _____

I, _____ (*name of resident*), am the owner, or agent for the owner, of the animal(s) listed above and have the authority to give this consent. I understand that my pet(s) will be sheltered at _____ (*name of Boarder*) so long as I am a resident at _____ (*WTHSP site name*). Upon my departure, I must make arrangements within 24 hours to retrieve my pet. If I fail to retrieve my pet by the time established in this contract and have failed to make alternative arrangements that I am relinquishing my pet to _____ (*name of Boarder*), and that the pet(s) may be placed for adoption or rescue.

Any costs incurred for medical care is the responsibility of the pet owner. If emergency medical attention is required, staff or volunteers may contact emergency medical services for my pet(s). If my pet is on medication for an existing condition, I agree to provide that medication to _____ (*Boarder*).

I agree to release and discharge the _____ (*Boarder*) and the _____ (*WTHSP site name*) from any and all actions, causes of action, claims and demands for, upon or by reason of any damages, loss or injury which may be sustained in consequence of the receipt of boarding and medical services under this program. This release extends and applies to all unknown, unforeseen, unanticipated and unsuspected injuries, damages, loss and liability and the consequences of them. This

release, however, does not extend to violations of the law and any injuries or suffering my pet receives as a direct consequence of a violation of law.

Resident name

Signature and Date

Boarder

Signature and Date

Pet Extended Care Contract Template

Resident name: _____

New address/phone: _____

Emergency contact name/phone: _____

Veterinarian name/phone: _____

Date leaving the WTHSP: _____

Anticipated length of extended care sheltering pet(s): _____

_____ (*WTHSP site name*) agrees to continue housing the following pets at the shelter as part of the Extended Care program:

Pet name	Species/Breed	Age	Gender
----------	---------------	-----	--------

Pet name	Species/Breed	Age	Gender
----------	---------------	-----	--------

The pet(s) listed above are allowed to stay at the above-named WTHSP at no cost for an extended period of _____ days while the above-named resident locates permanent or transitional pet-friendly housing. If the pet(s) require immediate medical care during their stay, the resident will be responsible for the financial costs that the veterinarian will provide. If the pet(s) is on medication or special food, the resident will provide a sufficient amount of these provisions before leaving. If the resident fails to retrieve her pet(s) by the expiration of this Contract, she agrees that the pet(s) has been relinquished and that the WTHSP may place the pets for adoption or other disposition with a local Animal Welfare Organization and that resident forfeits all legal rights to the pet(s).

The resident agrees to release and discharge the _____ (*WTHSP site name*) from any and all actions, causes of action, claims and demands for, upon or by reason of any damages, loss or injury which may be sustained in consequence of the receipt of boarding and medical services under this program. This release extends and applies to all unknown, unforeseen, unanticipated and unsuspected injuries, damages, loss and liability and the consequences of them. This release, however, does not extend to violations of the law and any injuries or suffering a resident's pet receives as a direct consequence of a violation of law.

Resident name Signature and Date

WTHSP staff

Signature and Date

Resident Evaluation

As a resident of the _____ (*WTHSP site name*), whether you arrived with a pet or not, we would appreciate your input on our pet-sheltering program which allows pets to reside with their families. Your honest opinions and helpful feedback will assist us in making this program a success for everyone.

1. Being allowed to bring my pets(s) to the _____ (*WTHSP site name*) was influential in my decision to leave my abusive home: (circle one)

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

2. I am satisfied with the services provided by the _____ (*WTHSP site name*): (circle one)

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

3. Concerns for my pets' safety impacted my decision to leave the abuser: (circle one)

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

4. What was the most helpful thing about the pet-sheltering program?

5. What can we do to improve the pet-sheltering program?

6. If you were a resident without a pet, please provide any feedback or suggestions about the pet-sheltering program.

7. Please share any other comments or concerns about your stay at the _____ (*WTHSP site name*).

Appendix C: Policy Templates

- Pet-sheltering Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Abandoned Pet Policy

The following policy templates include:

- *Rationale*: The rationale represents a statement of reasons/aims/objectives that detail why the policy has been developed and is important to the service. The rationale gives context (political or organizational) to the policy development.
- *Policy Statement*: The policy statement describes the rules, guidelines and boundaries of a specific issue. This statement should demonstrate the organization's position or decision about how the organization will carry out its activities.
- *Procedures*: Procedures are the methods to implementing a policy. They are action oriented. Procedure's detail who performs the procedure, what steps are performed, when the steps are performed, and how the procedure is performed.
- *Policy created date*: Date policy created.
- *Policy review date*: Date policy up for review.
- *Policy designate / overseen by*: Who is responsible for overseeing the policy, for example, finance person, executive director, and volunteer coordinator.

The policy templates provided below only include the rationale and the policy statement. Procedures and other components have been left out intentionally as these will vary greatly between agencies and program.

Pet-sheltering Policy Template

Rationale: The links between violence against women and animal maltreatment and abuse are well documented, as are the challenges faced by women with pets trying to secure safe shelter when leaving a violent situation. The love and connection women feel for their pets can significantly impact their ability or willingness to leave their pet behind with the abuser. Agency XYZ recognizes that women may potentially stay in a violent and unsafe situation when they do not have a safe place for their pet to live and that staying may increase their risk of further and/or more severe violence.

Policy Statement: Agency XYZ⁵⁵ is committed to reducing barriers that prevent or deter women from leaving violence by providing safe shelter to women and their pets experiencing violence.

Eligibility:

- a. The following pets⁵⁶ will be eligible to access pet shelter at Agency XYZ: *(list species, breeds and size of eligible pets)*.
- b. The following pets will be prohibited access to the pet shelter at Agency XYZ: *(list species, breeds, size, and other factors such as aggressive behavior, that will prohibit access)*.
- c. The pet(s) behaviour must be appropriate for a communal living environment.
- d. The pet(s) must be free of fleas and other pests.
- e. The pet(s) should have basic vaccinations.
- f. Cats and dogs should be spayed/neutered.

If the pet is not up to date with basic vaccinations, has fleas and/or is not spayed/neutered, Agency XYZ will work with their community partners to get the pet the medical care it needs in order to enable them to be sheltered in the pet-sheltering program at Agency XYZ.

Resident Pet Care:

Residents are solely responsible for the care of their pet(s) throughout their stay at Agency XYZ. This includes providing food and water, cleaning the cage or kennel daily, providing any medication, cleaning the litter box daily, walking the dog in a safe area designated by staff and cleaning up after it, and notifying staff if a pet needs veterinary care.

⁵⁵ Agency XYZ = insert the name of your organization

⁵⁶ A pet is defined as a domesticated animal kept for pleasure or companionship.

Residents with pets will sign the [Pet-sheltering Agreement](#) outlining the expectations of pet care during their stay to ensure the safety and wellbeing of everyone at Agency XYZ.

Staff Responsibility:

Staff will ask women about pets and concerns about pet safety when initial inquiries are made about crisis support, as well as on intake, in risk assessments, and in safety planning.

Select staff will support residents in regards to the care of their pet(s) when deemed necessary and appropriate.

Staff whom have allergies, fears or other concerns that prohibit them from engaging with certain, or all animals, will be provided with accommodations and/or exemptions from interacting with pets. No staff member is expected to be in direct contact with any animals that they are uncomfortable with.

Staff will build relationships, collaborate and partner with local Animal Welfare Organizations, Humane Societies and veterinarians to support the sheltering of pets at Agency XYZ and ensure relevant and appropriate care is available to pets in the program when needed.

Pet supplies will be maintained and be made available to residents with pets.

Procedures:

Policy created date:

Policy review date:

Policy designate / overseen by:

Pet-sheltering Health and Safety Policy Template

Rationale: It is the duty of Agency XYZ to ensure, so far as it is reasonably practical, that all employees, volunteers and the women and their dependents they serve are not exposed to risks to their health and safety. Agency XYZ believes that safety and the prevention of accidents, injury or loss is essential to the efficient operation of Agency XYZ. The aim of this policy is to ensure that all staff are aware of the safety and security policies and protocols related to the sheltering of pets which are to be employed to promote the personal health and safety of employees, volunteers and the women and their dependents they serve.

Policy Statement: Agency XYZ is committed to fostering a safe living environment that supports the health, safety and wellbeing of staff and all women and their dependents accessing its services and programs. This includes, but is not limited to, transparency regarding the pet-sheltering program, personal safety, controlling who the pet has contact with, cleanliness and allergen reduction. Agency XYZ will ensure that systems, policies and procedures are in place and reviewed regularly to promote the highest level of safety and security. All staff, residents and visitors will be oriented on the implementation of applicable safety and security policies and procedures.

Agency XYZ is committed to the following protocols to promote the safety and security of residents, staff and volunteers.

Safety:

All potential residents will be informed that the Agency XYZ site is pet-friendly and will be asked by staff if they have any health or safety concerns about staying in a pet-friendly site, so they can be best accommodated.

Staff will assess for aggressive pet and/or anti-social behaviours during intake.

Staff retain the right to deny pets at intake due to overcrowded conditions or if the pet's condition, temperament, behavior or other factors would compromise the health, safety and/or well-being of the residents and/or other animals.

Pets will only have contact with the pet's owners and select staff/volunteers. If the pets are kept in a separate kennelling area, then only the staff and owners will be permitted to enter the facility.

Pets are only allowed in designated areas of the Agency XYZ site and its property. Pets are prohibited in the (*list areas that are prohibited such as the kitchen, common areas, etc.*) to avoid unwanted contact between other residents, staff and pets.

Large dogs should be muzzled and leashed while walking through common areas.

Cats and other smaller animals should be transported in a secured carrier while walking through common areas.

Staff retain the right to ask the resident to find alternate accommodation for their pet once their stay has commenced if there are issues with the pet's condition, temperament, behaviour or other factors that may compromise the health, safety or well-being of the residents or other animals. If rehousing the pet is required, staff will work with community partners to support the resident to find alternate accommodation for her pet(s).

Staff whom have allergies, fears or other concerns that prohibit them from engaging with certain, or all animals, will be provided with accommodations and/or exemptions from interacting with pets. No staff member is expected to be in direct contact with any animals that they are uncomfortable with.

Noise and Odors:

Agency XYZ will do a deep clean of the pet-sheltering rooms between all residents' stays.

If noise from a particular pet becomes excessive, staff may ask the resident to re-house the pet elsewhere, such as with a partnering Animal Welfare Organization.

Allergies:

Agency XYZ will inform all potential residents that the Agency XYZ site it is pet-friendly, and ask if they have any health and safety concerns so they can best be accommodated.

Pets are only allowed in designated areas of the Agency XYZ site and its property. Pets are prohibited in the *(list areas that are prohibited such as the kitchen, common areas, etc.)* to prevent unwanted contact between other residents, staff and pets and to avoid the potential spread of allergens.

Agency XYZ will employ frequent and extensive cleaning to reduce allergens *(define frequency and extent of cleaning)*.

Agency XYZ will provide portable HEPA Air Purifiers for pet free rooms to reduce allergens.

Procedures:

Policy created date:

Policy review date:

Policy designate / overseen by:

Abandoned Pets Policy Template

Rationale: Agency XYZ respects the rights and dignity of the people and animals it serves. We acknowledge that women leaving violence may encounter a multitude of barriers and challenges in securing safety and wellbeing. There may be instances when women leave their pet(s) behind at the Agency XYZ site. When this occurs, Agency XYZ is responsible for continuing to provide safe and supportive services to all residents, pets included, until they are retrieved by their owner or are found alternate safe housing.

Policy Statement: Agency XYZ is committed to ensuring the safe-keeping of pets who have been voluntarily or involuntarily left behind.

A pet(s) may be left behind when:

- A resident can no longer take care of the animal;
- A resident leaves the Agency XYZ site and does not come back for the pet;
- The housing options available to a resident do not allow for pets.

When the pet is abandoned:

In the instance that a pet is abandoned, Agency XYZ will continue to care for the pet for *X* number of days (*define length of time*), while making attempts to connect with the pet owner and/or their emergency contact to determine when they will come and retrieve the animal.

If after *X* number of days (*define length of time*), the pet has not been retrieved by the owner or emergency contact, Agency XYZ will take legal ownership of the pet. This policy will be clearly communicated to residents and outlined in the *Pet-sheltering Agreement* that residents with pets will be required to read and sign upon intake. At this time, Agency XYZ will work with community partners to re-house the pet.

When Agency XYZ agrees to continue to provide pet care after departure of resident:

In situations when residents are leaving Agency XYZ but request that their pets remain behind will be handled on a case-by-case basis. If Agency XYZ agrees to continue to provide care for a determined amount of time, the resident will sign an *Extended Care Contract* that outlines the parameters of the pet's stay.

If the pet(s) require immediate medical care during their extended stay, the pet owner will be responsible for the financial costs that the veterinarian will provide. If the pet(s) is on medication or special food, the pet owner will provide a sufficient amount of these provisions before leaving.

If the resident fails to retrieve her pet(s) by the expiration of the *Extended Care Contract*, the pet(s) has been relinquished and Agency XYZ will take legal ownership of the pet. Agency XYZ

may then place the pet(s) for adoption or other disposition with a local Animal Welfare Organization and the woman forfeits all legal rights to the pet(s).

Procedures:

Policy created date:

Policy review date:

Policy designate / overseen by:

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