The Link Between Domestic Violence and Pet Abuse: A look at research, policies and programs

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Agenda

1. The research
2. Policies
3. Overview of Safe Havens
4. More on Safe Havens
5. Safe Havens Digital Presence and Goals
The Research
Major findings from over 30 years of empirical data on link between domestic violence and animal abuse

• Both shelter workers and women entering domestic violence shelters report that partners threatened, injured or killed their pets¹
• Various studies indicate that up to 48% of women state they delay leaving a dangerous situation because they do not know how to keep their pets safe²
• The human–animal bond can offer an important sense of comfort and well being³
More major findings

• Multiple studies found that severity of domestic violence is linked to severity of pet abuse⁴

• Domestic violence crisis and intake workers often state that they do not ask questions about pets⁵
The Pet and Women Safety Act

The new federal law prohibits the following:

• Interstate harassing and stalking that places victims in reasonable fear of the death of, or serious bodily injury to, their pet, service or emotional support animal.
• There is now a criminal penalty for traveling across state lines for the purpose of harming a pet who is covered by a restraining order
• PAWS also authorizes restitution for veterinary medical expenses.
• Provides grants for shelter and transitional housing and other assistance to survivors of domestic violence and their companion animals.
• Administered by the Department of Justice's Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) – Emergency and Transitional Pet Shelter and Housing Assistance
• The OVC goal is to provide approximately five awards of up to $500,000 each for a 36-month period. Applications typically open in April and end in June.
Including pets in protection orders/temporary restraining orders

- In 2006, Maine was the first state to pass legislation that stated pets could be included in restraining orders, also known as pet protection orders.
- Now, thirty-seven states, including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, have laws to ensure that victims of domestic violence can include their pets in restraining orders.
- You can use AWI's state manuals for domestic violence advocates and their attorneys that offer a step by step approach of how to include pets in a state's protection orders.
- [https://awionline.org/content/including-pets-protection-orders](https://awionline.org/content/including-pets-protection-orders).
States with PPOs

Safe Havens for Pets | Animal Welfare Institute
Including pets in protection orders/temporary restraining orders

Even in those states without such specific laws, it is generally possible to add pets to orders as property—this is one instance in which their legal position as “property” actually works to their benefit. Most state protection order laws contain language that gives courts discretion to permit additional orders. For example, a court can order that pets be included in a TRO as they do for the temporary care of children or possession of property. Conditions bonds also can include pets.

And a protection order can authorize law enforcement to assist with the removal of a pet from the home.

Therefore, even if a state does not have a pet protection order statute, a petitioner should include incidents of pet abuse or threatened abuse in the complaint or petition and request that the court include pets in the property or “other relief” section of the protection order to cover the pets.
Overview of Safe Havens
Safe Havens Map
Overview of safe havens

**Safe havens** are sheltering services that assist individuals experiencing domestic violence with placing their companion animals out of harm's way so that they may seek safety for themselves.
Overview of safe havens

Safe havens operate differently from community to community.

Some rely on networks of foster care homes or are allowed to use the additional kennel space of a local humane society or veterinarian.

In some cases, domestic violence shelters house survivors and pets together, while some house the pets on-site but not in same area.

They can be independent nonprofit organizations or formal partnerships between domestic violence agencies and animal agencies or groups.
Overview of safe havens

Depending on the local arrangement, family members may be able to visit their pets while they are in safe-keeping.

Confidentiality of the pet’s location is highly guarded in order to protect the pets and their family members.

How long a pet may stay in a safe haven again will depend on the local arrangement—some stays may be shorter than others depending on the capacity of each facility.
Overview of Safe Havens for Pets

The Safe Havens for Pets database was established by the Animal Welfare Institute in 2011 to help individuals find safe havens. The database now has a standalone website, with approximately 1,200 entries in all 50 states and D.C. Safe havens are searchable by zip code or state.

The information listed on the directory is re-verified on an ongoing basis by making direct contact with the personnel of the site being re-verified.
Using the safe havens directory

Search near you for safe havens for pets of individuals who are experiencing domestic violence

BROWSE BY ZIP  DISTANCE IN MILES  BROWSE BY STATE

- Include only places where pets are housed on-site, with their human companions

FIND A SAFE HAVEN

The Safe Havens Mapping Project is a searchable directory for pets of those experiencing domestic violence, created and managed by the Animal Welfare Institute.

My Sister's Place
WASHINGTON, DC 20009

844-443-5732
202-529-5261

VISIT WEBSITE
FACEBOOK
CLICK TO EMAIL

LAST REVERIFIED: MAY 29, 2020

DC Safe Support for Empowerment
WASHINGTON, DC 20004

202-506-2901

VISIT WEBSITE

LAST REVERIFIED: MAY 21, 2020

Asian Pacific Islander Domestic Violence Resource Project
WASHINGTON, DC 20044

202-833-2233
202-833-2232

VISIT WEBSITE
FACEBOOK
CLICK TO EMAIL

Safe Havens for Pets | Animal Welfare Institute
Overview of Safe Havens for Pets

Indicates that pets are housed on-site, with their human companions, at a domestic violence shelter.
Safe Haven reverifications

We prioritize the **accuracy** of our database, ensuring the information is as **up-to-date** as possible. We realize that individuals using our database often are in crisis and need reliable information.

We rely on volunteers to research and contact individual Safe Havens to verify and/or update existing information.
Safe Haven reverifications

"I am working with the Animal Welfare Institute. We have a national directory of services offered to pets of domestic violence survivors. We are calling to verify two things:

1) Does your group provide either information or a service to the victims of domestic violence to place their pets in a safe place while they seek shelter for themselves? (If NO, ask another question to clarify.)

2) We would like to verify the information we have to ensure it is correct.

- Name of group
- Telephone numbers (hotline and business)
- Do you have a Spanish hotline?
- Zip code
- Email address
- Website and/or Facebook (if any)
- Do you house the pets on-site with survivors?"

Here's what we ask when we contact Safe Havens.

Can you think of anything else we should be asking to be sure we are fulfilling our goals?
More on Safe Havens
Other Ways to Assist Survivors with Companion Animals

Safety Planning for Pets of Domestic Violence Victims

CREATE A SAFETY PLAN THAT INCLUDES YOUR PET

If you are planning to stay...
- Keep emergency provisions for your pet in case your abuser withdraws money
- Keep the phone number of the nearest 24 hour emergency veterinary clinic
- Establish ownership of your pet by creating a paper trail (e.g. obtain a license, have veterinarian records put in your name)

If you are planning to leave...
- Obtain safe emergency shelter for pet, somewhere that won’t be disclosed to your abuser (e.g. veterinary, friend, family, a civil haven for pets program)
- Pack a bag for your pet that includes:
  - Food
  - Medicines
  - Documents of ownership (training, proof of adoption or purchase of pet, license to establish ownership, receipts for animal purchases)
  - Health documents (veterinary or vaccination records)
  - Leash
  - Collar
  - ID and vaccines tag, if a dog or cat (these will also help establish ownership)
  - Toys
  - Bedding

- Encourage nonemergency callers to your hotline or website to create a safety plan for their pets. You can direct them to these resources:
  - [https://awionline.org/content/safety-planning-pets-domestic-violence-victims](https://awionline.org/content/safety-planning-pets-domestic-violence-victims)
  - [https://www.thehotline.org/resources/safety-planning-with-pets/](https://www.thehotline.org/resources/safety-planning-with-pets/)
Questions about Pets to Ask Domestic Violence Survivors
Calling the Hotline or During Intake

• Do you have a pet or pets?
• Has anyone you know tried injured or threatened your pet?
• Has anyone in your home ever killed a pet?
• Do you have a safe place for your pet if you seek shelter?
• (If applicable): Are you aware that pets may be included in protection orders/temporary restraining orders?
How can my community start a safe haven?

The manner in which safe havens for pets develop depends upon the capacity and best thinking of the local community. For a comprehensive review of how to start a safe haven for pets, please see:

https://dontforgetthepets.org/training-handbook/
Powered by Good Charities + RedRover, sponsored by Pet Smart Charities
Funding opportunities for Safe Havens

- **American Humane– Meacham Foundation Memorial Grant:**
  https://www.americanhumane.org/initiative/meacham-foundation-memorial-grant/

- **American Humane– Second Change Grants**
  https://www.americanhumane.org/initiative/second-chance-grants/

- **AKC Humane Fund– Women’s Shelters Grant**
  http://www.akchumanefund.org/forms/womens_shelters_grant

- **Banfield Foundation– Safer Together Grants**
  https://mvhc cares.tfaforms.net/f/BFSTG

- **Hugs and Kisses Animal Fund Grant**
  http://hugsandkissesanimalfund.org/grant-application/

- **Mary Kay Foundation: Domestic Violence Shelter Grant Program**
  https://www.marykayfoundation.org/causes

- **Paws for Love Foundation**
  https://pawsforlove.info/story.html
Funding opportunities for Safe Havens

• Petco Love
https://petcolove.org/for-partners/investment-opportunities/

• Purina Shelter Champions: Grants
https://www.purina.com/about-purina/supporting-communities/apply-for-support

• Red Rover: Safe Escape Grants
https://redrover.org/relief/dv-safe-escape-grants/

• Red Rover: Safe Housing Grants
https://redrover.org/dv-safe-housing-grants/

• Greater Good Charities: Rescue Rebuild
https://greatergood.org/rescue-rebuild
Funding opportunities for Safe Havens

- Greater Good Charities: Rescue Bank
  https://greatergood.org/rescue-bank
- The Blinky Foundation: Grant Program
  https://binkyfoundation.org/our-grant-program/
- Veterinary Care Foundation Funding Opportunities
  https://veterinarycarefoundation.org/how-it-works/
- Veterinary Care Charitable Fund
  https://www.vccfund.org/
- Department of Justice Office for Victims of Crime– Emergency and Transitional Pet Shelter and Housing Assistance
  https://ovc.ojp.gov/funding/opportunities/o-ovc-2021-96005
Social Media Fundraising

**Know your audience & build your community**
- Take time to get to know your target audience.
- Figure out what aspect of your organization appeals to your audience.
- Create a Facebook Group, E-mail list or mailing list.

**Develop a communication plan**
- Increase your reach and keep the conversation going with hashtags, but make sure it's unique to your organization!
- Send out announcements when you've hit checkpoint goals, or when you have an update about your fundraiser

**Be Transparent**
- Let your followers know how far you are from reaching your goal!
- Share how you intend to use your donations
- Make sure you thank your donors for their contributions
Safe Havens Digital Presence and Goals
Safe Havens for Pets digital presence and goals

In hopes of further engaging the audience on the right side of the venn diagram, we decided to launch dedicated social media accounts.

AWI's audience

Potential audience: DV groups, survivors, advocates

SH4P existing audience
Safe Havens for Pets goals

• To extend protection to domestic violence survivors and their pets by promoting and raising awareness of the Safe Havens for Pets database and other animals and family violence resources

• Engage with DV and interpersonal violence advocacy groups + entities listed on the Safe Havens for Pets database

• Collect information from entities listed on Safe Havens for Pets database to further refine website, messaging, resources, verification process, etc.

• Highlight and promote DV and interpersonal violence advocacy groups + entities listed on Safe Havens for Pets database

• Create opportunities for entities listed on Safe Havens for Pets database and/or groups hoping to start a Safe Haven to share resources with each other, ask questions, and generally network

• Extend motivational messaging for individuals experiencing or recovering from domestic violence
Safe Haven Spotlights

When we have had the opportunity to learn more about a particular program, we always learn something important—and come away impressed. In efforts to engage with and promote entities listed within the database, we’ve sought to connect with one group each month to share a “Safe Havens Spotlight.”

In doing so, we’ve learned some really interesting information about programs offered by some groups that we thought you may find interesting. For example, the SafeNest program in Las Vegas has dog trainers come to the shelter to offer basic obedience classes to the pets (and their human companions).

Another group in Sarasota takes the children of the domestic violence survivors to a program with the local humane society, allowing children and pets to interact in a safe and comfortable environment.
SAFE HAVEN SPOTLIGHT ⭐️⭐️

PeaceWorks Inc, Colorado

IN A TYPICAL YEAR, PEACEWORKS PROVIDES ABOUT 2,000 NIGHTS OF SHELTER TO 115 ADULT SURVIVORS/YOUTH AND ABOUT 1,000 NIGHTS OF SHELTER TO 40 PETS

THEIR SAFE PETS PROGRAM INCLUDES:

- Indoor and outdoor cat and dog facilities
- Shelter for all pets: domesticated, exotic and livestock included
- Medical care through collaboration with local agencies

INDOOR AND OUTDOOR CAT AND DOG FACILITIES

- Indoor, spacious and heated kennels for cats and dogs
- Outdoor pet play yard
- Keeps people and their pets together in a time of distress through their Safe Pets Program

PET MEDICAL CARE THROUGH COLLABORATION WITH LOCAL AGENCIES

- Along with incoming families, medical and dental needs of pets are taken care of upon arrival

PET MENTAL WELLNESS PROGRAMS INCLUDE:
- Pet Reiki
- One-on-one time between survivors and pets
- Calming music
- Vests
- Blankets
- Night lights
- Dog toys

SHELTER FOR ALL PETS: DOMESTICATED, EXOTIC AND LIVESTOCK INCLUDED

- Shelter and advocacy are available for all pets, without discrimination, regardless of the number of animals being brought to Safe Shelter
- Foster care available for livestock at a nearby facility
- Exotic pets such as birds, reptiles and fish are housed in the rooms with their families
- Individualized safety plans and intake forms for pets
Safe Havens for Pets digital presence and goals
Follow us on social media for more information

@SafeHavensforPets
@SafeHavensforPets
@SafeHavens4Pets
References


References


