

# SASKATCHEWAN SPCA | PATHS | STOPS TO VIOLENCE

Pet Friendly Shelter Viability Report  
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**PRAXIS**  
RESEARCH | STRATEGY | RESULTS



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# Executive Summary

In December of 2020, Praxis Consulting Ltd. was hired by the Saskatchewan SPCA (SaskSPCA), Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services of Saskatchewan (PATHS), and STOPS to Violence (STOPS) to determine the feasibility of creating pet-friendly shelters throughout Saskatchewan for the survivors of intimate partner violence (IPV). 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. Several research methods were utilized in this study, including background document review and secondary research, in-depth interviews with key informants, and focus groups with IPV shelters and SPCAs.

## Primary Research Findings

**Interviews:** Interviews with key informants determined that the pet-friendly accommodations are relatively inexpensive and easy to set up. Existing shelter infrastructure can be shared for pet-friendly and non-pet-friendly areas. Funds for pet-related needs can be used from existing donations and fundraisers. Additionally, seeking support through donations from local community resources is a reliable method of obtaining supplies when required. Pet program policies regarding pet care and legal responsibilities/waivers can be built into existing shelter policies. With the exception of city regulations on space, there have been no legal challenges caused by accommodating pets experienced by our interviewees. They also maintain relationships with Animal Welfare Organizations and veterinarians to be able to provide accommodations and services for pets at a discount, especially for services that may be otherwise expensive, such as veterinary care services.

**Focus Groups:** The focus group was conducted with three shelters from urban, rural, and northern Saskatchewan, as well as an Animal Welfare Organization, which provided useful insight into the readiness for pet-friendly accommodations in shelters within a Saskatchewan context. The needs between urban, rural, and northern Saskatchewan varies in some respects, such as supply delivery, transportation, and ability to fundraise within different areas of the province differs. One participant has a second stage shelter that is pet-friendly, but the other shelters have agreed that they would not have space for indoor pet accommodations beyond allowing pets to stay in the rooms with owners. Some barriers to accommodating pets include the size and number of pets, the policies that each organization may have to follow, obtaining board and management approval, as well as other costs, such as pet deposits, for certain shelters. The participants agreed that maintaining a strong network with Animal Welfare Organizations, SPCAs and humane societies, and veterinary clinics would be essential in accommodating pets. One participant from an Animal Welfare Organization said they would be happy to support shelters in accommodating pets, whether it is providing supplies or additional space for animals.

## Alternative Solutions

**Kennelling Off-Site:** A boarding kennel is a facility that houses and safekeeps pets while their owner(s) are away. Typically, these facilities will house pets in cages (kennels), and some may include access to a dog run, or a dog park. One barrier to this option includes the fact that survivors of IPV may not have the

means of paying to have their pet(s) kept in a boarding kennel. A cheaper alternative may be to house pets in animal shelters, such as the local Humane Society or SPCA, although these organizations already have existing barriers, such as overpopulation, in accommodating animals.

**Foster Care:** Fostering is another option that is available to survivors fleeing IPV with their pets. In this case, the pet would be kept in a secure location with a foster family. The foster family is a volunteer household that would be responsible for taking care of the animal(s) throughout either the entirety of, or a portion of, the survivor's stay in the IPV shelter and second stage housing, if needed. Some foster programs may be able to care for pets for a few weeks, while others may have programs for longer durations. Some barriers to this option include lack of availability of foster families, confidentiality concerns, and pet safety concerns.

**Informal Services:** When sheltering, kennelling, or fostering their animal is not possible, the survivor may need to rely on local and informal services such as volunteer organizations (e.g., a church), or they may rely on community members or their own family members. Certain parts of the province, such as rural and northern Saskatchewan, are limited in their access to many services due to lack of transportation, veterinarians, and space for large animals, such as horses and other types of livestock.

## Recommendations

Praxis recommends that IPV shelters follow a pet-friendly model. Pet-friendly IPV shelters and second stage housing allows the survivors of IPV to remain with, and care for, their pet(s) on their own. Having their beloved pet(s) by their side provides a sense of security and comfort for the survivor and their children, and even the animal(s). Furthermore, this option removes many of the barriers, as it is completely free for the survivor, does not tie up the resources of Animal Welfare Organizations, coincides exactly with the survivor's length of stay, and the survivor's location and personal information are kept strictly confidential by the shelter. While there are a few barriers that can certainly pose a great challenge for IPV service providers and AWOs, many of these barriers can be overcome with responsible staff, 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.

## Organizational Assessment

**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. One popular grant is the PetSmart Charities Grant Program.

**Staffing Requirements:** No additional staff are required to accommodate pets within shelter, but existing staff roles would have to expand for considerations such as pet-sitting, 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, and ensuring that all clients are following the prescribed pet policies in the shelter.<sup>1</sup>

**Physical Asset Requirements:** The physical infrastructure requirements for a pet-friendly program depends on the type of pet-friendly program the IPV shelter chooses. The option of in-room

animal safekeeping requires little to no infrastructure building or renovating. Indoor kenneling may require some renovations to an indoor space to accommodate pets. Outdoor kennelling will require the most significant investment into infrastructure because it will require the construction of a new building on the property, 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 shelters will need to maintain on-hand.

**Financial Analysis:** The cost of a pet-friendly sheltering program will largely depend on the type of sheltering option that is chosen by the IPV shelter. An in-suite sheltering option is the most cost-effective option, as this will require few, if any, renovations to the current infrastructure. Praxis estimates that a shelter can expect to pay approximately \$360.00 per animal in start-up costs to purchase key supplies such as kennels/crates, toys, leashes, and other non-consumable items. Praxis estimates the monthly average variable cost per pet will approximately \$40 for both dogs and cats, which includes consumable goods such as kibble and wet food, as well as non-reusable items such as cat litter and dog waste bags. The option of on-site kennelling 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.

**Legal & Regulatory Analysis:** While it is highly recommended that the IPV shelter consult with a licensed attorney prior to taking in animals to ensure all legal requirements are met, some general legal considerations include local zoning, code enforcement, and health departments who can determine if the IPV shelter will be required to have a license to house pets on-site, or if special permits are needed to build outdoor kennels. Whenever possible, IPV shelter clients should bring legal proof of ownership/custody of the animal in order to avoid custody issues (such as city pet licenses, adoption paperwork from rescue or breeder, etc.).

**Policies and Procedures:** In order to address some challenges that may arise when accommodating pets, policies and procedures should address the following: confidentiality of clients; types of animals allowed on premises; handling of abused, aggressive, or stressed pets; responsibility of caring for pets; animal noise, allergies, and odor; fear of animals; pet grief counselling; safety and security of all staff, clients, and pets; relinquished animals; preparation for clients when leaving the shelter; objections from staff and residents; services provided for pet-related needs; visitation of the animal; and, returning animals to owners if placed in foster care, shelter, or boarding kennels.

**Networks, Partnerships, and Publicizing the Program:** IPV shelters need to create a network with a variety of organizations in order to run a successful pet-friendly sheltering program: transportation; law enforcement; medical care staff; veterinary care staff; Animal Welfare Organizations; livestock protection organizations & farmers; mental health professionals; financial institutions; universities; and, not-for-profit organizations helping women.

## Critical Success Factors

**Relationship-building:** Shelters will need to depend on a network of organizations, such as Animal Welfare Organizations, veterinary services, pet supply companies, and philanthropic resources within local communities, to accommodate pets.

**Education, Training, and Spreading Information:** Shelters, PATHS, SaskSPCA, and STOPS need to work together to create educational resources and provide information to the public, donors, and other institutions, to spread awareness regarding the link between pets and IPV and garner support for pet-specific programs within both shelters and the province.

**Collaboration:** There needs to be a greater degree of collaboration between shelters to be able to discover innovative, creative ways to accommodate pets within shelters, especially in areas with limited access to resources.

**Fund Raising & Donations:** Building strong relationships with donors is critically important for maintaining emergency cash and everyday supplies to keep the program running smoothly.

## Next Steps

The following “Road Map” is meant to serve as a general implementation plan for building a pet-friendly shelter program. This plan is broken down by what actions are necessary to start-up and maintain the program, and what actions should be taken to build the “ecosystem” surrounding pet-friendly shelters.

### Phase A: Laying the Foundation

1. Assemble a Pet-Friendly Planning Committee (PFPC). Ideally, this should consist of experts from a variety of relevant professions, including veterinarians, directors from IPV shelters and provincial associations, university researchers, social workers, and directors of Animal Welfare Organizations such as humane societies or the SaskSPCA.
2. The PFPC determines the vision of the provincial program, and creates some SMART goals and objectives. Establish timelines and the scope of the pet-friendly program that you wish to implement. For example, will you first only consider traditional housepets such as cats and dogs, or will you expand your program to also include other animals such as smaller animals, reptiles, fish, or livestock?
3. Consult with a lawyer familiar in housing law and health and safety regulations to determine that the pet-friendly program has taken into consideration all the relevant laws and regulations. This will be critical information to include in any educational materials that will be developed.
4. Develop educational materials such as information packages, presentations, pamphlets, webinars, etc. to help inform key service providers across the province of the link between IPV and animal abuse.
5. Build key relationships and partnerships early. Partnerships may have already developed during the formation of the Pet-Friendly Planning Committee, but if not, it is recommended to establish formal partnerships with organizations such as the Saskatchewan Veterinary Medical Association, government agencies such as the Ministry of Social Services, and others as detailed in Section 5.7.

Additionally, establishing a relationship with housing authorities and offering educational materials/presentations are an important step, as they are responsible for certain second stage housing units, which currently do not allow pets.

6. Develop a marketing and communications plan for IPV shelters, Animal Welfare Organizations, government agencies, police services, veterinarians, etc. to inform them of the new program, and how they can best contact the PFPC for resources. Share with them the educational materials that were developed in step 4.

### **Phase B: Preparing for Launch**

1. Conduct an environmental scan of your community to determine the need for a pet-friendly program, and the resources that you have available to your specific community. This can include opening a dialogue with current and past residents who own(ed) pets and identifying Animal Welfare Organizations, farms, and veterinarians in the area.
2. Identify a Program Director within the IPV Shelter who will champion the pet-friendly program, and be ultimately responsible for overseeing the program's start-up and ongoing operations.
3. Decide which pet-friendly program option is best suited for your shelter. If you decide to choose the in-suite option, it is recommended that the shelter identify which rooms will be considered pet-friendly.
4. Develop the shelter's programs and policies, and ensure that these are shared with shelter staff, volunteers, and made available to residents.
5. Establish a program annual budget that matches the expenses associated with the pet-friendly program model chosen.
6. Seek financial support from the community to pay for initial start-up costs such as supplies and capital to make necessary changes to the infrastructure.
7. Promote the program to the community by distributing informational pamphlets, or offering information sessions to the local authorities (such as RCMP, municipal police, veterinarians, and animal welfare organizations) and social workers (such as IPV counselling centres and other non-profit organizations) in your area. Promote the program on your social media, and on the website.

In summary, the pet-friendly program is an excellent option for IPV shelters to undertake as it can be relatively inexpensive to start-up, many liability issues can be mitigated with proper policies, educational materials can be distributed to key stakeholders, and ultimately it is the most kind and compassionate sheltering option for the survivor and their pet.

# Part 1: Engagement Introduction



## 1.1 Background

In December of 2020, Praxis Consulting Ltd. was hired by the Saskatchewan SPCA (SaskSPCA), Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services of Saskatchewan (PATHS), and STOPS to Violence (STOPS) to determine the feasibility of creating pet-friendly shelters throughout Saskatchewan for the survivors of intimate partner violence. The aforementioned organizations can be described as follows:

**Saskatchewan SPCA:** Saskatchewan Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals is a registered Canadian charity. SaskSPCA not only wants to protect animals that are the victims of violence, but they also want to improve the lives of all animals. This includes providing the essential needs for homeless pets, supports for animals who need a safe home, and education and advocacy for animal welfare.

**PATHS:** Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services of Saskatchewan (PATHS) is the member association for agencies that provide emergency shelter and counselling services to survivors of intimate partner violence in Saskatchewan. PATHS supports their membership and communities through awareness, education, research, advocacy, revenue generation and providing programs and services.

**STOPS to Violence:** Saskatchewan Towards Offering Partnership Solutions (STOPS) to Violence is a provincial network connecting individuals and organizations across Saskatchewan. Together this network shares a common objective: to diminish interpersonal violence and abuse, and develop engaged communities that are safe and valued.

As a response to the overwhelming research that proves the link between domestic abuse, animal abuse, and other forms of abuse, these three partnering organizations shared a common objective of developing strategies to reduce violence and provide services to those people and their animals/pets experiencing violence. Together, these organizations sought to determine the support options available to accommodate and protect both survivors of intimate partner violence, their children, and their pets.

## 1.2 Project Description

The purpose of this project was to study the viability of transforming the network of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) shelters in Saskatchewan into pet-friendly environments, so that survivors of IPV can ensure their pet's safety while also providing both the survivor and their pet(s) the companionship and comfort of being at each other's side. The research has shown a clear link between IPV and animal abuse, and further to that, the research has also indicated that individuals fleeing domestic violence are far less likely to leave their abusive spouse when they are not able to ensure their pet's safety and security.

To determine the viability of this initiative, Praxis examined numerous dimensions of a pet friendly shelter environment that program directors would need to take into consideration before implementation. These included:

- research that demonstrates the link between IPV and animal abuse, and the need of survivors to have their pet(s) accompany them through such a tumultuous time;
- physical resources (i.e., supplies and infrastructure);
- human resources (i.e., staffing and volunteers);

- program costs and potential funding sources;
- networks and partnerships;
- legal and regulatory requirements;
- policies and administrative procedures; and,
- common opportunities and challenges.

This report outlines each of these dimensions in greater detail, and will demonstrate the need and viability of developing pet-friendly shelters in Saskatchewan.

### 1.3 Methods

Praxis utilized numerous research and analysis methods to determine the feasibility of developing pet-friendly shelters within Saskatchewan.

The first research method that was utilized included a background document review and environmental scan. This involved reading numerous studies (See a full list of references in Appendix E) that had proven the link between intimate partner violence and animal abuse, manuals to design and launch pet friendly sheltering programs (e.g., SAF-T Manual), news articles, shelter websites, and other relevant data bases and documentation.

This research was instrumental in proving the legitimate need for survivors fleeing domestic violence to be able to bring their pet(s) with them. Praxis had expanded on the preliminary research of the environmental scan, by conducting our own primary research with pet-friendly shelters across Canada.

The purpose of conducting interviews with Canadian pet-friendly shelters was to identify the best practices of organizations that already allow pets in the IPV shelters. The subject matter experts that Praxis interviewed included the following:

1. Jaki MacKinnon - Executive Director of Bethesda House, Bowmanville, ON;
2. Charlene Maurice - HR & Residential Program Manager of Interval House of Ottawa, Ottawa, ON;
3. Shelley Bolan - Director of Housing & Outreach at Ann Davis Transition Society, Chilliwack, BC; and,
4. Lisa Watson - Executive Director of Odyssey House Women's Shelter, Grande Prairie, AB.

Further to the interviews, Praxis also engaged in a focus group with key stakeholders in Saskatchewan. These stakeholders included key shelter staff of IPV shelters in Saskatchewan and staff of SPCAs and other Animal Welfare Organizations in Saskatchewan. Praxis was mindful to gather input from stakeholders that were located across Saskatchewan, and in particular, we identified three main geographic areas: urban, rural, and northern communities. The reason for categorizing key stakeholders by their geographical region was because the services and supports available to survivors of IPV will differ depending on where that individual is in the province.

### 1.4 Limitations

1. Legal Analysis – While Praxis had engaged in a legal and regulatory analysis of developing pet friendly IPV shelters in Saskatchewan, it is still recommended that any program director speak with

an experienced licensed legal representative to identify the applicable laws and regulation of Saskatchewan, and all applicable bylaws.

2. **Livestock & Farm Animals** – While this study does briefly explore the safekeeping of livestock, the vast majority of the research is focused on traditional housepets such as dogs, cats, birds, reptiles, fish, and other small pets. Further investigation is recommended for the safekeeping of livestock and other farm animals of those IPV survivors in rural areas of Saskatchewan.
3. **Engaging Survivors:** Praxis did not engage with IPV survivors due to the sensitive nature of their environment from the trauma they have endured. To gain an understanding of their perspective, Praxis had reviewed numerous studies during the secondary research phase that directly surveyed survivors. However, using the secondary research instead of directly conducting primary research forces us to make assumptions and interpretations of data.

### 1.5 The Need and The Link

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is a form of abuse or aggression that occurs in a romantic relationship. One partner (the perpetrator) will abuse the other partner (the victim/survivor) through a number of means, including physical violence, sexual violence, stalking, and psychological aggression.<sup>2</sup> The impact of IPV is immense, and can have “lifelong impacts on an individual’s physical, mental, sexual and reproductive health. Impacts can include physical injury and death, disabilities – including depression and post-traumatic stress disorder – as well as sexually transmitted infections, unintended pregnancy, miscarriage, substance use, absence from school or work, job loss and social isolation.”<sup>3</sup> The economic cost of intimate partner violence against women in Canada is estimated to be approximately \$4.8 billion per year.<sup>2</sup> Saskatchewan has the highest rates of intimate partner violence in the entire country, with the rural and northern communities of Saskatchewan being the most impacted by intimate partner violence. In northern Saskatchewan, the rates of IPV were 13,886 victims per 100,000 population in 2017 – the highest in the entire country.<sup>4</sup> This rate of IPV far exceeded the provincial rate of 765 victims per 100,000 population in the same year, making northern Saskatchewan the most dangerous place for women in Canada.<sup>5</sup> While the statistical data presents an alarming picture, tragically, it is most likely higher given that 78% of IPV cases are not reported to the police.<sup>5</sup> The resources available to northern and rural communities in Saskatchewan, such as IPV shelters and Animal Welfare Organizations, are quite limited, under resourced, and under funded.

The research indicates that there is a clear link between animal abuse and IPV. In cases of intimate partner violence, the abusive spouse will threaten, neglect, or physically harm animals as a means of coercing, controlling, isolating or seeking revenge on their partner.<sup>6</sup> Among these forms of abuse, neglect of the animal by starvation or abandonment are the most common; however, in cases of IPV, the most prevalent form of abuse is physical abuse.<sup>6</sup>

When the IPV perpetrator commits animal abuse/neglect, or threatens abuse/neglect, the IPV survivor suffers immensely and the likelihood they will leave an abusive relationship is significantly diminished. Many survivors of IPV will not flee because they are afraid something bad will happen to their animal(s), they and their children have an emotional connection to the animal(s), and they have limited awareness or access to formal accommodations for them and their animal(s). In a published research survey of 83

IPV Service Providers and Animal Welfare Organizations (AWO), it was found that 96% of IPV service providers said safekeeping of animals impacts an individual's planning and decision to leave an abusive partner, and 78% were aware of individuals who did not leave an abusive spouse because they had concerns for their animal(s).<sup>6</sup> In a study conducted by Amy Fitzgerald, an associate professor in the department of Sociology, Anthropology and Criminology at the University of Windsor, it is reported that 89% of women who are or have been in an abusive relationship had their pets abused by their partner as well. Additionally, 56% of those experiencing intimate partner violence delayed leaving the situation out of concern for their animals' safety, and 33% reported considering returning to their abusive spouse because of their pet.<sup>7</sup> Victims of IPV will often choose not to flee because of the emotional connection they have to their animal(s). For many victims of IPV, they are already isolated and psychologically traumatized from endured abuse, so their animal(s) provide to them a source of comfort and support. Many survivors are devastated to leave their animals, regardless of whether the animal is kept in the abusive household, or if they are sheltered in a safe foster home. The survivors often feel isolated and more vulnerable without their animal(s), as many pets are considered family. The guilt that survivors feel after leaving their animal(s) may cause them 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.<sup>8</sup>

Choosing to flee violence with an animal can be further complicated when children are involved and develop similar emotional connections to the animal(s). Pets can play a critical role in the lives of a child. In her manual, *Sheltering Animals and Families Together (SAF-T)*, Allie Phillips states "for children, studies have shown that pets: (1) benefit childhood development by providing a sense of security and self-esteem to children; (2) allow children to develop trust due to constancy, security, reliability, love, and affection; (3) facilitate play, exploration, and independence; (4) promote responsibility and nurturing; (5) provide social and emotional support; and (6) provide a positive impact on the lonely, emotionally or physically impaired, and delinquent". Children may show signs of anger, frustration, and stress by leaving the animal(s) in the abusive household, which can cause further stress to the IPV survivor.<sup>8</sup>

While there have been few studies on the link between animal abuse and child abuse, a study published in the *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* has shown that 80% of families with physical child abuse have also had a record of animal abuse.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, research confirmed by the Humane Society of the United States and the SAF-T manual have both shown that children who experience family violence in a pet-owning home are three times more likely to act out violently towards animals too, as this becomes a learned behaviour and is normalized.<sup>10</sup> This evidence has been further reinforced by a study completed between 2001 and 2004 by the Chicago Police Department, which "revealed a startling propensity for offenders charged with crimes against animals to commit other violent offenses toward human victims." Of those arrested for animal crimes, 65% had been arrested for battery against another person.<sup>11</sup> The evidence presented illustrates the devastating impact intimate partner violence has on survivors, children of survivors, animals, and society. Intimate partner violence is cyclical in its nature, and has the potential to devastate families for generations and drain the economy of billions of dollars each year. To break this cycle, victims of IPV desperately need the knowledge and awareness, resources, and support to ensure they, their children, and their animals are kept safe and secure from violence.



## Part 2: Primary Research Findings & Analysis

## 2.1 Key Findings – Interviews

The purpose of conducting informant interviews is to draw on the individual experience, knowledge, and expertise of those leading similar initiatives to identify best practices. We interviewed individuals from four pet-friendly shelters across Canada. These organizations are a mix of emergency shelters and second stage housing. Additionally, these shelters cater to various models of pet housing – on-site kenneling and in-room accommodations for pets. The learnings from these shelters helps inform and guide the process of setting up pet-friendly shelters and accommodations in shelters across Saskatchewan. Detailed interview answers can be found in Appendix A.

We asked the informants a variety of questions about their shelter services and infrastructure:

- Three out of four shelters interviewed house the animals in-room with residents. One shelter uses an on-site kennel;
- One in-room shelter treats all rooms the same, while another in-room tries their best to separate pet-friendly rooms from non-pet residents;
- All three in-room shelters do not have a separate ventilation system for pet-friendly rooms. The shelter with an on-site kennel has its own HVAC system;
- All four shelters do not have separate entrances and exits for those with pets;
- One shelter says they have parameters and guidelines rather than policies for how pets should be handled. Another shelter says that pets are to be muzzled/leashed or kenneled in common areas, while another says they have policies around health checks for animals and expectations in terms of handling the pet;
- All shelters have said that they have not faced major resistance from staff regarding their pet-friendly status. One shelter mentioned that they did extensive staff training to explain the benefits of being pet-friendly. Two shelters said that they try to explain to their clients that they do not have to be around the animals if they are not comfortable;
- Two shelters said that they orientate new clients coming into the shelter regarding their pet-friendly status upon intake. Another shelter says that they have a dialogue with their client regarding their pet-friendly status;
- **Consultant Observation:** The dialogue regarding a pet-friendly shelter status can occur either prior or at the point of intake.
- All four shelters have reported no issues with neighbours and the pets in the shelter. However, two of the shelters own the buildings/properties next to them; and,
- When asked about which pets are accepted into their shelter, two shelters have reported that they will not accept reptiles due to risk of disease. One shelter says that “common sense and flexibility prevails,” in regard to how many animals they can accommodate. One shelter said that they have accepted reptiles, cats, dogs, birds in cages, mice, lizards, and fish into their shelter.

The informants were also asked about the finances for funding and operating the pet-friendly programs:

- Two shelters said that they do not actively fundraise for the ability to remain pet-friendly; instead, they simply use money from regular operational funds if any costs arise. Three shelters have mentioned that they depend on donations. The shelter with an on-site kennel also did a community fundraiser and applied for grants because the building of the kennel was expensive for them;
- Two shelters have stated that it is minimal cost to startup the program, while another shelter named minor purchases, such as cleaning supplies, as a cost;
- When asked about monthly costs for petkeeping, two shelters said that they rely on donations for food support and other equipment;
- All four shelters have said that they are successful at gathering supplies through donations;
- Three shelters have stated that they have agreements with local veterinarian clinics for free/reduced rate services. Another shelter said that they have not come across the situation where they have needed a veterinarian;
- One shelter said that they do not apply for grants for the pet program, while another depended on a mailout and a large donation from a family. When asked for funding sources, shelters mentioned Pet Smart Canada, pet food companies, local brands, and humane societies as potential areas to find funding information; and,
- Two shelters said that their insurance has not increased as a result of accepting pets on-site. Another shelter was unsure of their insurance status.

We also inquired about the program policies in place to accommodate pet programs in shelters:

- Three shelters said they do not have a designated program director for pets. Instead, two shelters depend on the program manager, while another said that whoever is on shift looks after the pets;
- When asked about training staff, one shelter said there is no pet-specific training, but it is a part of their trauma-informed response training. Another shelter mentioned that they introduced paperwork in staff meetings, invited the SPCA to initiation meetings, and provided online training and reading material;
- One shelter said that there are no policies as to which types of animals are allowed in the shelter, but rather, it is assessed on a case-by-case basis. Another shelter has mentioned that they refuse rabbits, large snakes, insects (e.g., spiders), and dogs with bad behavior as determined by screening; and,
- Two shelters have said they might seek alternative arrangements if the pet is aggressive, abused, or stressed.

When asked about the legal aspects of accommodating pets in shelters, informants have mentioned several important factors:

- Two shelters have not experienced legal issues.

- One shelter has supported a client as they sought legal custody over a pet, while another mentioned that they have city bylaws on the number of pets and noise restrictions;
- One shelter does not use a waiver during the intake process, but they outline expectations. Another shelter asks its clients to sign a waiver claiming full responsibility of the pet;
- Three shelters have said that they have not have legal issues with the ownership of the animals; and,
- Of the two shelters asked, both have said that they have not been subject to legal action because of the pets that they accommodate.

Informants were asked about the partnerships that their organizations maintain in order to enable the accommodation of pets within their shelters:

- Shelters mentioned local SPCA, local dog food stores, PetSmart, veterinary medical associations, local humane societies, animal control, and veterinary clinics as partners;
- One shelter mentioned that veterinarians typically provide first visits and vaccinations free;
- Another shelter said that they work with the RCMP and are at the top of their response list as a result of that relationship. Additionally, they sit on a local collaborative of eight other service providers that seek to eradicate domestic and sexual violence. They also have great connections to nonprofits and municipal governments;
- Another shelter mentioned that police forces in their region are required to have training in the human/animal violence link, so they work with the provider of that training in terms of education;
- Another shelter mentioned that they partner with police for on-site police reporting.

## 2.2 Key Findings - Focus Groups

As part of our primary research, a focus group was conducted with three shelters located in urban Saskatchewan, rural Saskatchewan, and Northern Saskatchewan. Another participant had experience with an Animal Welfare Organization in Northern Saskatchewan. The purpose of this group was to gather input, suggestions, and concerns they might have about pet-friendly shelters. Their perspectives will assist in shaping organizational priorities and will allow them to feel involved and bought-in to the business planning process. A detailed summary of focus group answers can be found in Appendix B. Below, in a question-and-answer format, are the key findings of the focus group.

### **Have you had any experiences with shelter users bringing pets to the shelter?**

- One participant mentioned that they have a pet-friendly building, as well as a non-pet friendly building, stating that building ownership and corresponding regulations presented a barrier to accommodating pets.
- One participant in Northern Saskatchewan said that they have many stray animals in their area, so it is a completely different issue for them.
- Another participant said that they do not have much experience with animals, but their shelter would not turn away clients due to an animal.

- One participant with an Animal Welfare Organization stated that they limited contact with local safe shelters.

**Have you heard of anyone not being able to stay in the shelter as a result of having pets?**

- One participant mentioned that they would place residents with pets in the pet-friendly building, and the residents without pets in the non-pet-friendly building, provided there were openings in both buildings to do this.
- Another participant recalled an instance where a client had to leave the shelter because her friend was unable to care for her pets, and the shelter could not accommodate them.

**What do you think shelters can do to assist shelter users in accommodating pets?**

- One participant said that while they do not have a specific policy for or against having a pet, having a dog run or a specific area set aside that could be used for that type of stuff could be helpful.
- Another participant mentioned that longer term shelters and housing arrangements should be advocating for having pets because people might be able to give their pets to friends or family for a couple weeks, but not forever.
- Another participant said that they try to work with each client and accommodate based on a client-by-client basis.

**How comfortable are people in being in a space that has pets?**

- One participant said that one of her staff has a real fear of dogs.
- Another participant mentioned that they are excited and they all pushed for a pet-friendly building.
- In the case of allergies, one participant said that the animal would have to stay in a certain area and they would have to deep clean and sanitize.
- Another participant mentioned that they have to stay in their area because there are other families in there with children.
- Another participant said that everyone has their own apartments, so they keep the pets in their own apartments, aside from the hallways where they would be leashed.

**What kind of supports would you anticipate that your shelter would need if it were to become pet-friendly?**

- One participant in Northern Saskatchewan mentioned that everything they do has to be approved by their senior management and board, so there has to be some sort of policy put in place, and everything has to be outlined. Particularly, there were concerns about grocery delivery and transportation of animals to the north.
- **Consultant Observation:** Grocery delivery concerns in Northern Saskatchewan may include greater expenses and time-delays for bringing in pet supplies, such as food.

- Another participant mentioned that it would make sense to have a budget for dog or cat food, or if a resident was struggling to feed their animals, or if they were having financial issues, it would be good to have a budget for that to ensure that the animals are properly cared for.
- A participant who has experience with an Animal Welfare Organization said that a lot of volunteers will go out of their way to make highway trips to remote communities, leaving supplies, and picking up the animal and placing it in hold/ foster until the home situation would be resolved.
- When asked about which supplies an IPV shelter should have on hand to take care of an animal, the participant mentioned food, veterinarian medicines, pain killers in case something happened to the animal, kitten and puppy milk, kennels, blankets, bowls, leashes, and anything one gets when you get a new animal, but just tucked away in a bag or a tote.

#### **What are the barriers for your shelter to accommodating pets?**

- One of the participants worked at Melfort and referenced an instance where a client had six horses, so it was a big struggle to find housing for those horses. Ultimately, the Executive Director networked through friends to find someone who had room in a farm and had bales for the horses.
- Another participant referenced barriers including building ownership and having to adhere to the owner's policies.
- The participant also mentioned that in their shelter that does allow pets, they want a non-refundable pet deposit, but that can be a barrier for someone who is struggling financially and can barely pay rent.

#### **Does your shelter have space to accommodate pets?**

- One participant mentioned that there is no space for anything. They have outdoor areas that they could use, with insulated dog houses and dog runs. Also, the animals could come and stay in the rooms.
- Another participant mentioned that they have a backyard, but they do not have the space for anything separate. Maybe a doghouse and a run in the back, but the participant liked the idea of kennels in the room.

#### **What kind of policies would best support the accommodation of pets in a shelter?**

- One participant mentioned that it depends on the type of animal, so it is case-by-case.

#### **Do you anticipate any legal/regulatory challenges to accommodating pets in your shelter?**

- One participant with a pet-friendly building said that they have faced no legal challenges yet.

#### **What kind of costs do you anticipate will arise for your shelter if it were to start accommodating pets?**

- One participant raised concerns about the costs of the veterinarian bill if the animal got hurt by abuser.
- Another participant said that if the animal starts creating a mess, does some damage, or hurts a client, the shelter would have to be prepared to find an alternative for that pet, but the shelter

would now be on the hook as the host. It can be a huge cost if someone gets hurt by someone else's animal.

- Another participant wondered if they could get waivers to protect themselves from the situation described above.

**Do you think that there are any potential partnerships that can assist your shelter with caring for pets/livestock?**

- One participant said that budgets are an issue, and there is never enough money, so help is needed for food, supplies, veterinarian bills, kennels, etc.
- Another participant said that veterinarians could donate a portion of a bill or an entire bill for residents of a shelter, or they could call out and come to the shelter instead of the resident having to go to the clinic.
- The participant said that partnering with humane societies and SPCAs to help lobby to the provincial government for the importance of having pet-friendly shelters available is vital.
- In terms of resources, assistance, and partnerships, a participant with experience in an Animal Welfare Organization said that they have a first responder mentality when it comes to fleeing abuse situations.

**Do you think it will be difficult to fundraise in your community for pet-related needs that could arise in your shelter? Explain.**

- One participant mentioned that in Saskatchewan, second stage shelters are not provided operational funding from the provincial government, so they are constantly fundraising to keep operations running. They do not fundraise for pet-friendly needs, it would be just for keeping staff and have the building open.
- Another participant said that there is not a lot of employment in their location in Northern Saskatchewan. A lot of people are on assistance, so the participant is not sure how fundraising would go.
- Another participant said that it is something that they could try, but lots of people fundraise in their town for everything.

**What do Animal Welfare Organizations have in terms of resources to assist shelters?**

- One participant with experience with an Animal Welfare Organization said that currently, their humane society has a very healthy operating budgets for a variety of social programs. Their organization has more resources to give than the government does sometimes, and they try to distribute them to other shelters and people in the communities.
- The participant also mentioned have a network of people who are willing to help them and take in animals when they need to.
- When asked what approach they took to bring in livestock, the participant said that they send people to the farm because animals are best left where they have always lived. If they need

veterinarian care, that is the only occasion where the organization would make any kind of arrangements.

- When asked about pet safety, the participant said that it has not come up. Their organization is usually called after the threatening party leaves from the property, or after they have left the picture.

**Does your AWO or veterinarian clinic have the capacity to provide services or shelter animals if a shelter reaches maximum capacity with clients' pets?**

- The participant mentioned that there are times of the year, such as late fall and early winter, when the shelter is full. If that is the case, they reach out to their network. The participant's organization and their network all stay in contact in case of an overflow situation, and other rescues can help when they can.

## Part 3: Alternative Solutions



There are various options available for survivors of IPV to flee with their animal(s), these include:

1. boarding kennels and animal shelters;
2. fostering;
3. informal arrangements with local volunteer organizations, community and family members; and,
4. pet-friendly IPV shelters and second stage housing.<sup>8</sup>

At the time of writing this report, only the first three options stated above are available to survivors of IPV fleeing with their pets, as there are no emergency IPV shelters and only one second stage shelter in Saskatchewan that is pet-friendly. There are many complications that make access to these three options a great challenge for some survivors, forcing them to stay with their abusive spouse to ensure the safety of their animal(s), or to flee without their animal(s) where the animal(s) may be abused or neglected. Some survivors may be able to secure an Emergency Intervention Order from the Court of Queen's Bench, which would allow the survivor to stay in the household, while the abusive spouse is removed from the home. However, this option may not be the safest option for the survivor.<sup>8</sup> In the following sections, we will outline each of the animal safekeeping options, and provide a case for the viability of pet-friendly IPV shelters and second stage housing in Saskatchewan.

### 3.1 Kennelling Off-Site

A boarding kennel is a facility that houses and safekeeps pets while their owner(s) are away. Typically, these facilities will house pets in cages (kennels), and some may include access to a dog run, or a dog park. These are privately run organizations that are usually for-profit, and therefore naturally creates a barrier to survivors of IPV. This is because survivors of IPV often also suffer from financial abuse, and therefore may not have the means of paying to have their pet(s) kept in a boarding kennel.

A cheaper alternative may be to house pets in animal shelters, such as the local Humane Society or SPCA. Unfortunately, there are many barriers that accompany this option as well. To begin, local Humane Societies and SPCAs have challenges with overpopulation due to limited space available within the facility, as many stray animals or surrendered pets enter. Due to the problem of overpopulation, the length of stay that can be afforded to a survivor's pet most likely will not coincide with the length of time they need to stay in the IPV shelter or second stage house. The animal shelters have a mandate to serve stray and feral animals, not animals that are already owned. Animal shelters may only be able to take in animals for a few days up to a couple weeks, as their capacity changes on a daily basis, whereas a survivor of IPV can require many weeks or even months to initially recover from the abuse, secure housing, find employment, etc.<sup>8</sup> Problems can persist for animal shelters when they are given short notice for animals entering the facility, or when owners do not come back to retrieve their pet in time. In the past, there have been situations where the animal(s) have been put up for adoption, because the survivor was not able to retrieve the animal(s) in time. Furthermore, animal shelters often do not have the financial resources to safekeep animals completely free of charge, which again creates a barrier for survivors of financial abuse.<sup>5</sup> Lastly, another barrier that lingers despite efforts by some Saskatchewan communities, is that animal shelters may not be open at the time the IPV survivor flees their abusive partner. Many survivors of IPV will flee during late hours of the night when the perpetrator is asleep, or

on weekends when the perpetrator is not home. Some organizations, such as the Regina Humane Society, have implemented programs like the Safe Places Program to address this issue. This program gives the Regina Police Service access to the shelter outside of operating hours so victims fleeing at irregular hours are able to ensure their pet is placed in a safe and secure facility.<sup>8</sup>

### 3.2 Foster Care

Fostering is another option that is available to survivors fleeing IPV with their pets. In this case, the pet would be kept in a secure location with a foster family. The foster family is a volunteer household that would be responsible for taking care of the animal(s) during the survivor's stay in the IPV shelter. The length of time an animal can be fostered is determined by each foster program. No personal information about the survivor is shared with the foster family, and visits with the animal(s) are arranged through an intermediary staff member of the IPV shelter or second stage house. This is to protect both the identity of the foster family and the survivor. Fostering may not a viable option for the victim nor the pet(s) in some cases. The victim will often worry about their pets' safety, and may be significantly more distressed by the lack the companionship and support the animal(s) brings. Similar to kenneling, a new environment in the home with strangers can cause a great deal of stress in the pet(s) as well. To alleviate some of the survivor's concerns, some foster programs have allowed for pictures and videos of the pet(s) to be sent to survivor. Other IPV shelters may allow for the visiting of pets, by having the foster family first exchange the pet with the program director, then the program director facilitating the visitation with the IPV survivor.<sup>8</sup>

The option of fostering is preferable to sheltering or kennelling, as the ability of a foster family to care for the animal(s) is generally longer than in a shelter. The financial burden of fostering is also non-existent for the survivor, unlike than if they had to pay for kennelling costs daily. However, a barrier exists with fostering, as there is generally a lack of foster families available to IPV survivors in Saskatchewan, especially in smaller communities. Despite the security policies and procedures built into the pet-friendly program, there is still an inherent risk, or perceived risk, with safekeeping the animal(s) of an individual with a history of violence, though the risk of retaliation is generally low.<sup>8</sup>

### 3.3 Informal Arrangements

When sheltering, kennelling, or fostering their animal is not possible, the survivor may need to rely on local and informal arrangements with volunteer organizations (e.g., a church), or they may rely on community members or their own family members. Similar to foster families, these individuals are at risk of coming into contact with the perpetrator, except the risk is much higher since they are likely not guaranteed the same protections afforded to shield their identity. Often this option is taken by survivors living in rural or remote communities, where most residents know each other and word spreads quick.<sup>8</sup> This can cause great concern for the confidentiality of the survivor and their pet, and can greatly jeopardize their safety. Foster families especially may feel pride in their good deeds, and this pride can put them at risk by "bragging" about their fostering, and unintentionally breach the confidentiality, which has occurred in the past.<sup>5</sup>

Certain parts of the province, such as Rural and northern Saskatchewan, are limited in their access to many of the services listed above. For example, IPV survivors in a rural setting may fear for the safety of

their horses or other livestock. Many animal shelters do not have the infrastructure to house large animals, and therefore the survivor is forced to lean on informal arrangements with neighbours or the community to house livestock on their farm. Furthermore, for these survivors there is also the challenge of travelling great distances to the nearest shelter, and difficulties in animal transportation, especially if it is livestock. This can pose a great problem for rural survivors if they cannot safekeep their livestock, as they can often be dependent on that livestock for their livelihood.<sup>5</sup>

Similar challenges face communities in northern Saskatchewan, such as the difficulty of travelling great distances, the limited access to sheltering and animal safekeeping resources, lack of veterinarians, and difficulties in transporting animals, especially when the animal must be flown out.<sup>8</sup> With these additional barriers in place, sometimes the only option for rural and remote survivors is the informal option, which has already been shown to be less than ideal.



## Part 4: Recommendation

## 4.1 Recommendation

Praxis recommends that IPV shelters follow a pet-friendly model.

An IPV shelter that allows pets to stay with their owner is the most ideal solution for the well-being of both the survivor of IPV, their children, and the pet(s). Marci Sanders, Director of Operations at the Shelter for Abused Women & Children in Florida, has seen the benefits of pet-friendly shelters firsthand, and says “the shelter for [animal] safety is one of the most humane, thoughtful, and appreciated services we provide. Rather than disconnecting them totally from everything they know, they can cuddle and play with their pets for the security and pure joy.”<sup>1</sup> Pet-friendly IPV shelters and second stage housing allows the survivors of IPV to remain with, and care for, their pet(s) on their own. Having their beloved pet(s) by their side provides a sense of security and comfort for the survivor and their children, and even the animal(s). Furthermore, this option removes many of the barriers, as it is completely free for the survivor, does not tie up the resources of Animal Welfare Organizations, coincides exactly with the survivor’s length of stay, and the survivor’s location and personal information are kept strictly confidential by the shelter.

While a pet-friendly shelter may overcome many of the barriers of boarding/kennelling, fostering, and informal arrangements the concept of pet-friendly shelters is not without its own set of challenges. Pet-friendly shelters offer the most humane and compassionate option for IPV survivors and their pet(s), but this will also result in the need for more resources of the IPV service providers and the Animal Welfare Organizations they might partner with. Chief among these concerns are: IPV shelters and AWOs are underfunded and therefore have difficulty in financing additional programs; there are safety and legal liability concerns surrounding animal and resident health (e.g., allergies, dog bite, fear of animals, etc.); there is a lack of knowledge, training, and partnerships between IPV service providers, veterinarians, and AWOs regarding animal safekeeping for survivors of IPV; current resources and infrastructure may be lacking in some shelters; lack of awareness of resources by IPV survivors; and, challenges in logistical procedures and administration, such as transportation, intake paperwork, document requirements, etc.<sup>5</sup> While these barriers can certainly pose a great challenge for IPV service providers and AWOs, many of these barriers can be overcome with responsible staff, 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. In the following sections, Praxis will outline the various challenges and mitigation techniques for designing and implementing a pet friendly program in IPV shelters.

### Animal Safekeeping Program Options

In Allie Phillips’ reference guide, *Sheltering Animals & Families Together: SAF-T Program Start Up Manual*, she refers to three specific models for sheltering pets at the IPV shelter. The first option is to have the animal stay in the room with the resident, while the second and third options involve kennelling the animals either indoor, or in a separate building on site.<sup>1</sup> Praxis recommends that PATHS, SaskSPCA, and STOPS to Violence share her work with the SAF-T program with their member agencies.

Housing the pet(s) inside the room with the residents is the recommended option so long as there are policies and procedures in place to protect the residents and animals. This model is preferred for a number of reasons outlined below:

- it provides the survivor with access to their pet(s) at all hours of the day, significantly improving the mental wellbeing of the survivor, and eliminating separation anxiety;
- it is the most cost-effective option as fewer resources and infrastructure are required;
- it reduces the spread of communicable diseases between animals, and zoonotic diseases between animals and humans, since they are kept separately in different rooms;
- it increases the staff's capacity and efficiency within the shelter, as the responsibility of looking after the animal is placed in the hands of the survivor; and,
- many of the challenges and risks can be mitigated with best practices.<sup>1</sup>

There are a number of challenges and risks that the IPV shelter staff should be aware of prior to beginning a pet-friendly program, but with proper precautions these can be mitigated. Table 1.1 details such challenges/risks and mitigations.

Table 1.1	
Challenge / Risk	Mitigation
The IPV shelter could face legal risks with animals biting other residents.	All residents should be informed upon intake that the shelter is pet-friendly, while pet-owning survivors should sign a Pet Agreement prior to staying in the residence. 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. <sup>1</sup>
Other residents may be afraid, allergic, or annoyed by animals present.	Inform all survivors who enter the shelter that it is pet-friendly, and they should be asked if they have any objections, so they can be best accommodated. Certain rooms can be designated as pet-friendly rooms, but this is dependent on space availability. Cleaning between each stay is important to reduce allergens. Barring animals from being in certain rooms, such as the kitchen, common areas, etc. can prevent unwanted contact between other residents and the animal. Separate entrances could also be used to reduce contact while moving through the building. <sup>1</sup>

Lack of funds to buy supplies and other resources.	Many pet-friendly shelters have been able to secure supplies from AWOs or donations, and services from veterinarians, for free. There are grant programs that are available for pet-friendly IPV shelter programs. Additionally, many residents are happy to use their own supplies.
Animals are abandoned by their owner.	IPV service providers should be required to sign an agreement that will allow the IPV shelter to have legal ownership should the resident abandon the animal. The pet can then be put up for adoption. <sup>1</sup>
Staff training and knowledge about animal sheltering is limited.	A training manual should be developed by PATHS, SaskSPCA, and STOPS to Violence and provided to IPV Shelters in advance of program start-up. Program directors can be trained on additional responsibilities, procedures, and duties. <sup>8</sup>
Noise and odors from animals.	If space permits, certain sections of the building could be designated as the pet-friendly, while others are placed further away from the animals. Also a deep cleaning should always take place in between residents' stays. Certain types of furniture or flooring will soak up scents more than others (e.g., carpet is less ideal than tile). Owners should be responsible for keeping their animals quiet to the best of their ability, and keep the room clean and odor free. <sup>1</sup>

Sheltering animals in a kennel on-site is also an option. This can be done by having animals kennelled within the IPV shelter building, such as in a separate wing of the building or in a basement, or it could be an entirely separate building that is located on the IPV shelter's property. Kennelling the animals on-site provides a hybrid solution between sheltering animals in-suite and having animals sheltered off-site in an animal shelter, foster, or boarding kennel. There are many advantages and disadvantages to the on-site kennelling program as detailed in Table 1.2 below:

Table 1.2	
Advantages	Disadvantages
Animals are kept separate and secure from other residents, reducing the risk of biting, allergies, or other health and safety concerns.	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. <sup>1</sup>
Survivors are still able to visit their pet(s) and know they are safe and secure.	There will be greater responsibility and more duties placed on staff members, as the kennels should be secure areas that are only accessible with staff members present. Additionally, shelters can be single-staffed. This could create challenges for staff being present in the house to attend to other residents, answer the phone, etc. if they need to accompany clients out to unlock the kennel building. However, solutions also exist for this problem; for example, perhaps each kennel is secured with a lock that only the shelter and pet owner are able to unlock.
	The resource and infrastructure requirements can significantly exceed in-suite animal sheltering, e.g., rooms/basement might require renovations to accommodate animals, if outdoors, a building with heating, ventilation, and cooling would be required, kennels will need to be constructed and/or purchased, high maintenance, etc. <sup>1</sup>
	The cost of additional resources is often much higher than the in-suite option.

Some further considerations for this option would be to build a dog-run on the premises, consult with local AWOs and provincial regulators to ensure the boarding area meets regulations, have secure locks on the kennelling facility, install a separate ventilation system for the kennelling area, sight blockers between kennels to prevent animals from becoming distressed or aggressive, a separate visitation area for scheduled playtimes with the owner, and the layout should separate different species of animals. <sup>1</sup>

Regardless of which method is chosen to safe-keep animals on the IPV shelter premises, if the resources and space is available, it may be beneficial to also have a designated room on the shelter property for animals 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. Sufficient room for three to four visitors is advised. <sup>1</sup>



## **Part 5: Organizational Assessment**

## 5.1 Potential Funding Sources

There are several ways to fund a pet-friendly program. The best way to fund a pet-friendly program is through the community, although financial support can also be provided through government grants, private organization grants, and sponsorships. Examples of community based fundraising could be to hold a capital campaign to raise the initial start-up capital; reach out to community groups and classrooms to help “adopt” a pet by providing monetary support or participating in fundraising drives (e.g., pet food, toys, or blankets drive); place donation canisters and drop off basket at the exits of local shops, such as a pet store; ask local businesses to become a corporate sponsor of your pet-friendly program, and include their name and logo on any materials that promote your program; and, ask for gift cards to purchase food for the animals.<sup>1</sup>

## 5.2 Staffing Requirements

Between three of the shelters that we interviewed, there was a consensus that bringing in additional staff to a shelter is not a requirement to be able to accommodate pets. Two shelters have mentioned that their shelter manager would deal with anything pet-related in the shelter, while another said that these responsibilities would fall to the staff members on shift at the shelter.

Secondary research indicates that the position of Program Director first be established to ensure that the policies are being adhered to, and that procedures are being followed. The Program Director is ultimately responsible for:

- ensuring the owners are maintaining their pet’s care on the weekends, at night, during holidays, and checking in with pets when the pet’s owners are not in the IPV shelter by delegating authority to the appropriate staff;
- ensure that the rooms, crates, kennels, etc. are thoroughly cleaned between use;
- keeping an accurate inventory of all animals that are entering and leaving the IPV shelter premises;
- managing the location where animals are kept, whether this be in a kennel on-site or in residents’ rooms;
- ensuring veterinary care is available when needed by forming partnerships with veterinarians and SPCAs, and maintaining frequent contact with them;
- maintaining supplies and medications for the pets; and,
- ensuring that residents understand the pet policies and owners of pets adhere to them.<sup>1</sup>

The tasks of staff have expanded to account for additional duties that arise due to the accommodation of pets. For example, one shelter has mentioned that an additional duty of accommodating pets includes the duty to inform clients entering the shelter that they are pet-friendly, just in case of allergies or religious reasons. This shelter typically goes through this information with clients during their intake process, both on the crisis line and on shelter tours. Another possibility is to include the information on the website.

There are some instances for which accommodation plans must be made for staff due to the presence of pets within the shelter. For example, one interviewee mentioned that they conduct periodic room checks within their shelter, and that they make exceptions for staff who are not comfortable with animals in the rooms. In this instance, the accommodation is that they exempt the specific staff member from having to conduct that room check if they feel uncomfortable with the presence of pets inside. Furthermore, no staff member from this shelter is expected to be in direct contact with any animals that they are uncomfortable with. Additionally, a shelter has also mentioned that they have offered to bring in an allergy specialist to assess allergies for anyone on the staff. Depending on the specialist's advice, this shelter has offered to make accommodation plans should the staff member require it.

### 5.3 Physical Asset Requirements

The physical infrastructure requirements for a pet-friendly program largely depends on the type of pet-friendly program the IPV shelter chooses. The option of in-room animal safekeeping requires little to no infrastructure building or renovating. Minor changes to rooms may be required, such as replacing carpet with a hard-surfaced flooring, which could result in significant costs. Indoor kenneling may require some renovations to accommodate pets. This may be done in a spare room that is large enough to house multiple animals, in a garage, 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. Outdoor kennelling will require the most significant investment into infrastructure because it will require the construction of a new building on the property. Besides the building itself, the building will also require heating, cooling, and air circulation/filtration systems, while also following a similar layout to the indoor kennelling option.

Regardless of which model is followed, an IPV shelter may want to consider having a wash station available for pet owners to bath 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 IPV shelter can arrange discounted services or can subsidize part of the cost to the client).

An IPV shelter should carry supplies on-hand to aid in the care for pets entering the shelter. 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 program SAF-T that an IPV shelter 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;
- towels and blankets for pets to lay on;
- grooming products; and,
- basic medical supplies, such as flea or parasite medicine. <sup>1</sup>

## 5.4 Financial Analysis

Prior to developing a pet-friendly sheltering program, the IPV shelter should make many financial considerations, such as revenue sources for funding the program, partnerships the shelter can leverage for supplies and resources, estimated cost of supplies, capacity to intake animals (i.e., how many animals can be supported at any given time), costs of emergency procedures on animals, and most importantly, which model of the pet-friendly program the shelter would like to implement. The model of pet-friendly sheltering that is chosen will have a significant impact on the cost of the program. In this section, Praxis will outline the anticipated costs associated with each program's start-up and maintenance, and revenue generating activities that can help pay for the program itself.

Housing inside the resident's room is the cheapest model to follow, as it requires little to no cost for initial start-up, and minimal monthly expenses. Since pets are housed in the residents' rooms, there is no need to purchase or build a kennelling facility on-site. Most expenses associated with this model are monthly maintenance costs such as cleaning, providing medical care as needed, providing food and water, toys, litter, leashes, etc. This means that the cost associated with this model is highly dependent on the number of animals present in the building, given most expenses are variable. In the SAF-T manual, costs are estimated to be approximately \$200.00 - \$500.00 USD per month. <sup>1</sup>

Housing in 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. Start up costs for this program might include purchasing animal crates and cages, building a kennelling area to house with concrete dividers between cages, and potentially purchasing separate ventilation systems to prevent allergies. The cost of this option highly depends on the infrastructure of the shelter and what the shelter has capacity for. The SAF-T manual has reported some programs in the United States that can do this for as low as \$1,000.00 USD. Similar to the first option, the same monthly costs still exist for in-shelter kennelling. <sup>1</sup>

The final pet-friendly sheltering option is the most expensive option of the three pet-friendly program models. This is the most expensive option because it requires the construction of an entirely new building on the IPV shelter's site. This building needs to have proper heat for the winter, air conditioning

for the summer, and air filtration/circulation. It is also highly recommended that this option also include a dog run or animal exercise area. This option may cost tens of thousands of dollars depending on the size of the building, quality of materials, and spot prices of commodities in the given location, among other things. <sup>1</sup>

Praxis had conducted an independent financial analysis of the in-suite pet-friendly model, and determined that start up costs could reasonably be estimated at approximately \$360.00 per pet if the client does not bring their own supplies. This includes the following list of supplies needed for dogs and cats to be adequately cared for:

- Litter Box
- Litter Box Scooper
- ID Tags
- Cat Carrier
- Dog Crate
- Dog Bed
- Cat Bed
- Scratching Post
- Cat Grooming Products
- Dog Grooming Products
- Food and Water Dishes
- Collars
- Leashes
- Chew Toy
- Cat Toys

This cost estimate is based on the following assumptions:

- The shelter will incur two types of costs, a fixed cost consisting of non-perishable and reusable goods, and variable on-going costs consisting of non-reusable goods such as food or litter.
- The shelter incurs all these costs, and no supplies are donated. Therefore, the values listed represent the estimated maximum cost of a pet-friendly program could reasonably expect.
- The shelter is assumed to take in all common pets such as cats, dogs, and other small animals, and purchase all supplies in the fixed cost category to help safekeep these animals.

The variable expenses can differ on a month-by-month basis, depending on many factors including the type(s) of animals that have stayed in the shelter for that given month, the size of the animal(s), the age

of the animal(s), the type of dry pet food that is used. Praxis estimates that an average cat and an average dog will both cost approximately \$40 per month for food and waste management. The assumptions for this are as follows:

- A 40 lb bag of dog food is assumed to contain 150 cups of dog food. The number of cups in a bag of dog food will vary depending on the density of the dog food, and the volume it occupies in the measuring cup.
- Dry dog food calculation is based on a average medium dog size of 60 lbs, and the feeding guidelines for dry dog food suggest that a dog of 60 lbs should eat 3 cups of dog food per day.
- The wet food calculations are based on an average cat of 8 lbs eating a half can (156 grams) per day.

This monthly cost does not include the cost of medical services such as check-ups, surgeries, or medicine. Please note that both kittens and puppies will require more calories than adult animals because they are still growing.

Regardless of which pet-friendly option an IPV shelter chooses, the shelter will likely incur costs related to caring for the animals. Residents should not be forced to pay to house their own pets, but many may be happy to purchase their own supplies if they have the means to do so. If a client moves out of the shelter and requests their pet stay behind, then the client should sign an Extended Care Contract. It is recommended that this type of offer only be given to families in situations where their temporary housing does not allow pets, but they are willing to search for long-term housing that does. <sup>1</sup>

## 5.5 Legal & Regulatory Analysis

It is highly recommended that the IPV shelter consult with a licensed attorney prior to taking in animals to ensure all legal requirements are met. The following is not legal advice.

After consultation with an attorney, the IPV shelter may wish to consider consulting with local zoning, code enforcement, and health departments who can determine if the IPV shelter will be required to have a license to house pets on-site, or if special permits are needed to build outdoor kennels. Shelters 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 shelter that animals are not allowed in, such as a kitchen. <sup>1</sup>

When a survivor of IPV first contacts the IPV shelter, they should be encouraged to bring as much evidence of pet ownership as possible with them to the shelter. This may include pet license forms, veterinary records, bill of sale, adoption papers, or anything else that would establish a history of being the pet's caretaker. <sup>1 10</sup> This serves the purpose of verifying the animal's health and vaccinations and acts as proof of ownership in the event matters go to court. Some programs may allow for relicensing the pet in the survivor's name if the survivor does not have any paperwork on them or if the pet is not already licensed with the city or town. If the pet is unlicensed, staff should encourage and/or assist the client with registering the animal as soon as possible. If the survivor is able to secure proof of pet ownership, this can act as evidence in court and will shift the burden of proof onto the abuser to demonstrate their ownership of the animal. <sup>10</sup> During intake the shelter should ask if there is a pet protection order, divorce/separation order, or other court order that designates ownership and custody

of the pet. Some court orders may prohibit moving any family members and assets until the case is settled. If the court has ordered a domestic violence protection order, divorce or separation agreement, then the IPV shelter can ask for a copy of that order or agreement to alleviate any future concerns over the custody of the pet.<sup>1</sup> The client is under no obligation to disclose this information but may share at their own will. It is important for shelters to inform clients of applicable laws regarding animal abuse and encourage/support them to take action. With client consent, any records that are available to the IPV shelter should be given to law enforcement investigators if requested during an investigation of animal cruelty by the abuser.<sup>1</sup>

Clients, foster families, and AWOs should sign confidentiality agreements to protect the identity and safety of each party. It is up to the client 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. When transporting the animal or sheltering it with an AWO, it is important that none of the client's information be divulged.<sup>1</sup>

It is recommended that IPV shelters acquaint themselves with *The Animal Protection Act* and provide the shelter staff with the key information they need to know to adequately care for pets in accordance with the law.

## 5.6 Policies and Procedures

As discussed above, there are numerous challenges that can hinder the viability of pet-friendly shelters; however, having sound policies and procedures is one of the most powerful ways an IPV shelter can protect itself from liability, and protect the health and wellbeing of all its residents.

It is recommended that a Program Director first be established to ensure that the policies are being adhered to, and that procedures are being followed. The Program Director is ultimately responsible for:

- ensuring the owners are maintaining their pet's care on the weekends, at night, during holidays, and checking in with pets when the pet's owners are not in the IPV shelter by delegating authority to the appropriate staff;
- keeping an accurate inventory of all animals that are entering and leaving the IPV shelter premises;
- managing the location where animals are kept, whether this be in a kennel on-site or in residents' rooms;
- ensuring veterinary care is available when needed by forming partnerships with veterinarians and SPCAs, and maintaining frequent contact with them;
- maintaining supplies and medications for the pets; and,
- ensuring that residents understand the pet policies and owners of pets adhere to them.<sup>10</sup>

The following are examples of policies and procedures that the IPV shelter should consider:

- **Confidentiality:** Maintaining a high degree of security of a client's information is paramount. It is recommended that only the caseworker who made the referral, the coordinators of the pet-friendly program, and their respective supervisors, have access to records about victims and their pets. All

files should be kept secure in a locked filing cabinet or desk, and all computer files should be kept on a password protected encrypted device. If the animal is fostered, then the IPV survivor and the foster family should not be given each others' names or contact information. Visitations should be facilitated by the Program Director, who transports the pet between the foster family and the survivor.<sup>10</sup>

- **Types of Animals:** When developing policies towards what types of animals will be allowed on the premises, the Program Director should first consider the experience of the staff in working with animals, potential liability concerns, the facility's physical infrastructure, and capacity to separate stressed and unhealthy animals from the rest of the animals.<sup>10</sup> If animals are aggressive, ill or injured, then it may be better to house these animals in partnering AWO's facilities. After these considerations have been made, the Program Director should detail in their policies what types of animals, size, and number of animals that can be kept safely on-site. Most pet-friendly IPV shelters can house cats, dogs, and can make accommodations for smaller pets like reptiles, fish, hamsters, gerbils, etc.<sup>1</sup> If the IPV shelter is located in a rural part of the province, it is recommended that the Program Director form relationships with the local farms to recruit potential foster care providers. There may be agencies such as farm animal sanctuaries, wildlife rehabilitation centers, or rescue groups that can be partnered with as well.<sup>10</sup>
- **Abused, Aggressive, or Stressed Pets:** 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 their abuse at home. When a survivor enters the shelter with their pet, they should be asked to provide detailed information on the pet such as behaviour, temperament, and how the pet may react to being in a shelter. This can help the Program Director decide if safekeeping within the shelter is suitable, or if the pet may be better suited in a kennel (either on-site or off-site). If the pet is aggressive, they should be housed with a partnering Animal Welfare Organization.<sup>1</sup>
- **Caring for the Pets:** Pet owners should be responsible for taking care of their own pets when implementing the in-suite option. The policies should clearly outline that residents are responsible for 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 shelter staff and cleaning up after it, and notifying shelter staff if a pet needs veterinary care. Pets should not be kept crated or kennelled 24/7. The pet owner should formally sign and agree to these terms, understanding that it is a privilege for them to have their pet on-site.<sup>1</sup>
- **Animal Noise, Allergies, and Odor:** If an animal is kept in-suite, then it can be expected that from time-to-time there will be concerns about noise, allergies, and odors. The best course of action is to try to create animal-friendly rooms in separate areas of the shelter, apart from other residents' rooms. Pet owners should be encouraged to do their best to reduce their pet's noise and calm them down. Also, having hard floor surfaces such as hardwood, vinyl, or tile, and a non-centralized heating/cooling system will help contain pet allergens, and allow for easier clean-up. If noise becomes excessive, the Program Director might need to consider housing that pet in an AWO. Also, animals should not be permitted in common areas such as the kitchen, bathrooms, living rooms, or

other areas that other residents might frequently visit. The best option to reduce animal noise, odors, and allergens would be to have a separate facility/kennel; however, this option would require the construction of a separate facility with heating, cooling, and ventilation.<sup>1</sup>

- **Fear of Animals:** Some residents or staff may be afraid of animals entering the shelter. This is another important reason to keep animals separate from common areas that other residents may use, if possible. The animal should ideally only have contact with the Program Director, select staff/volunteers, and the family.<sup>1</sup>
- **Pet Grief Counseling:** IPV service providers may want to consider having grief counselling resources available for family members fleeing violence who witness animals being abused or killed. This can have a long-lasting effect on those who witness the violence, and children can be especially prone to negative consequences, as research on the impact of exposure to animal abuse has shown an increased probability that child will commit an offence later in life.<sup>1</sup>
- **Safety and Security:** The IPV service provider should have safety plans and protocols in place to make sure that the staff, volunteers, residents, and pets are safe at all times. If the animals are kept in a separate kennelling area, then only the staff and owners should be allowed to enter the facility. It may bring peace of mind for locks and security cameras to be placed in certain areas to protect the property from intruders and abusers.<sup>1</sup>
- **Relinquished Animals:** Though most survivors will not relinquish their pet(s), there may be an instance where they are forced to because they cannot take care of the animal, the client leaves the shelter and does not come back, leaving the pet behind, or the secondary housing options available to them do not allow for pets. It is recommended that a policy be put in place for animals that are not reclaimed, and this policy should be communicated to the client upon intake.<sup>10</sup>
- **Leaving the Shelter:** A survivor may require several weeks, or even months, before they are prepared to leave the shelter and transition into other housing. In the Pet Agreement, this time frame should be clearly outlined, with the possibility of extension.<sup>10</sup> Throughout the survivor's time as a resident, the shelter should aim to find long-term pet-friendly housing options that fit the client's needs. In the event that the IPV survivor decides to return to the abusive home, it is recommended that the victim be provided information on how to report child or animal abuse.<sup>1</sup> Should the animal be fostered, there should be a contingency plan in case the survivor does not reclaim the pet.<sup>10</sup>
- **Objections from Staff & Residents:** In the event that a staff member, volunteer, or resident objects to allowing pets within the shelter, then the most ideal approach is to provide education. They should be made aware of the dangers faced by animals in an abusive household, the link between IPV and animal abuse, and the psychological and emotional needs of the survivor, children, and pet(s).<sup>1</sup>
- **Services Provided:** When an IPV service provider allows pets into their shelter, the basic types of medical care and services provided should be clearly outlined. Veterinary records should ideally be presented during the intake process; however, in many cases survivors will not have these documents with them after fleeing, so it is important to utilize partnerships with veterinarians to

conduct initial check-ups on the animals. If a pet is known or suspected to have been abused, then the animal should see a licensed veterinarian right away, and the veterinarian should be informed of the suspected abuse right away. This should be conducted as soon as possible, ideally in the first 24 hours, in the event there is some underlying medical condition, illness, or injury to the pet(s).

Examples of services that can be provided, with the help of a licensed veterinarian, include:

vaccinating, spaying/neutering, behavior evaluation, testing for heartworm, feline immunodeficiency virus, and other diseases, and emergency medical care. Many of these services may need to be done at a veterinary clinic, so transportation should be built into the animal intake process. Euthanasia may be required for those animals that are too sickly, and when putting the animal down is considered the most humane option <sup>10</sup>

- **Visitation of the Animal:** For animals that are in foster care or an animal shelter, it is recommended that the shelter signs a confidentiality agreement and works with the client to determine visitation based on the client's individual safety plan. Additionally, this can be a stressful situation for the animal, and involves many logistical challenges that can put people's safety at risk. As mentioned before, if visitation occurs, it should be through the handoff of the animal to the Program Director. It is also recommended that any tags on the animal do not have identifying information of the survivor, such as a phone number. <sup>10</sup> Instead, it is recommended that new tags containing temporary contact information be included for a supporting agency. This agency is then able to notify the relevant parties with minimal risks to safety.
- **Returning Animals:** If an animal is placed in foster care, shelter, or boarding kennel, it is recommended that there are written procedures in place for how animals are returned to the survivor once temporary sheltering is completed. The animal should be returned through the facilitation of the Program Director or their staff, so that the confidentiality of each other's identity is kept. The survivor should be provided community resources package that can aid them in their transition into longer-term care. This could include animal care tips, important phone numbers, family violence assistance programs, and pet-friendly rental housing listings, among other things. If the survivor intends to return to the abuser, the staff should educate the survivor about the dangers of returning, and affirm their commitment to help. <sup>1</sup>
- **Covid-19:** Given the current climate relating to Covid-19, it is recommended that policies be put in place for proper sheltering in accordance with Covid-19 safety guidelines. The following is an excellent resource to reference: [COVID-19 Guidelines | Co-Sheltering Collab \(co-shelteringcollaborative.org\)](https://www.shelteringcollaborative.org/).

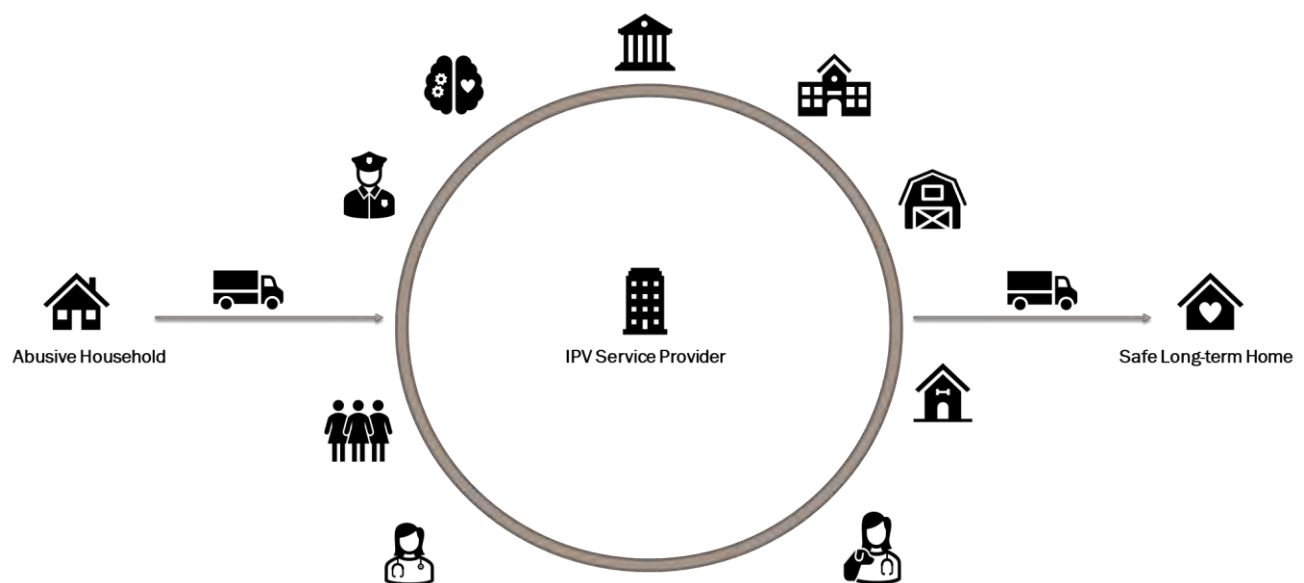
Samples of policies and procedures can be found in Appendix C.

## 5.7 Networks, Partnerships, and Publicizing the Program



Building a strong network through strategic partnerships is critical to the success of a pet-friendly sheltering program. Having a thriving network can help IPV shelters in multiple facets, such as providing useful supplies, key knowledge and skills, authority and legitimacy to the program, and other useful resources detailed in Table 1.3. At the time of writing this report, organizations such as PATHS,



SaskSPCA, and STOPS to Violence are working to develop an ecosystem that brings together these many types of organizations for the overall goal of providing quicker and better care to IPV survivors.






There is still more work to be done though. In the study *Intimate Partner Violence and Concern for Animal Care and Safekeeping: Experiences of Service Providers in Canada*, it was reported that only 8% of IPV shelters can adequately assist survivors with animal safekeeping. While this can also be attributed to the lack of infrastructure and resources, many of the barriers that prevent IPV shelters from being able to safekeep pets can be overcome with the help of a vast network. The study conducted found that only 46% of IPV service providers work with animal safekeeping organizations, while 79% reported wanting more information and training about animal safekeeping and IPV.<sup>6</sup> The following chart illustrates and explains the importance of considering a wide network during the development and implementation of the pet-friendly program.




**Table 1.3**

Icon	Organization / Entity	Description
	Transportation	Developing relationships with transportation companies may serve as a way to help transport many different types of animals, depending on the needs of the IPV shelter. For urban centers, purchasing a van to transport animals should also be considered, as it can accommodate many pets of numerous sizes. Rural IPV shelters may want to consider forming relationships with local farmers to help transport larger animals such as livestock.
	Law Enforcement	Having a good relationship with law enforcement can be very beneficial to the IPV shelter, because law enforcement officers such

		<p>have the authority to seize the animal from the abuser, and can offer protection to the victim of IPV when they are moving out of their former home. Additionally, Animal Protection Officers can investigate reports of animal cruelty, and help educate victims who own animals about the availability of domestic violence shelters that accept animals or foster programs to care for animals owned by victims.</p>
	Medical Care Staff	<p>Medical care staff provide vital services to survivors of IPV who may have suffered from physical, psychological, or sexual abuse. Forming relationships with nurses and other health care providers who specialize in trauma-based care is recommended. These staff may also provide a medium for which the IPV shelter can spread awareness of their pet-friendly program.</p>
	Veterinary Care Staff	<p>Veterinarians and their staff are critical partnerships, and IPV shelters should seek to establish a long-term relationship with numerous veterinary care facilities, and the provincial veterinary society. A veterinarian can serve many purposes, such as providing checkups, vaccinations and spay/neutering services; providing emergency care to pets that are suffering from illness or injury; and, providing expert opinion in court should the need arise to verify that animal cruelty had been present. <sup>1</sup> By law, veterinarians are required to report animal abuse.</p> <p>Veterinary care is a vital aspect of a pet-friendly domestic violence sheltering program. These services may include basic physical examinations, vaccinations, and simple medications. Veterinarians may also be able to provide more extensive medical procedures at a discounted price since survivors may not have the funds to pay for these services. These services could include surgeries, treating illnesses, performing x-rays, and conducting spay/neutering for the animal. <sup>1</sup></p> <p>IPV shelters should ask veterinarians to assist the program as a way of giving back to their community, helping the most vulnerable of our society, and keeping pets safe and healthy. Ideally, multiple veterinarians would accept to help and they could be put on a weekly rotation to come into the shelter to perform check-ups and other basic care. To help pay for more expensive procedures, money from the program's fundraising can be used, so that survivors are not forced to pay for the procedures themselves. <sup>1</sup></p>

	<p>Animal Welfare Organizations</p>	<p>Animal Welfare Organizations play an important role in the safekeeping of animals whether the animal is kept on-site in the IPV shelter, or off-site in an animal shelter. AWOs can provide training to staff and volunteers on how to handle and care for animals, give guidance on issues such as animal housing, local regulations and ordinances that could impact the housing of animals, provide physical resources such as supplies, and can help safekeep animals when the IPV shelter is at capacity, or the temperament of the animal warrants they be kept in an animal shelter. It is highly critical that a strong relationship be built between IPV shelters and the Animal Welfare Organizations in their area. A Memorandum of Understanding should be signed between the IPV shelter and the AWO. <sup>1</sup></p> <p>In addition to AWOs, it is also recommended that IPV shelters form strong relationships with pet groomers, as they may be willing to provide the necessary grooming services for a discount, or free of charge.</p>
	<p>Livestock Protection Organizations &amp; Farmers</p>	<p>Forming partnerships with Livestock Protection Organizations such as farm animal sanctuaries, wildlife rehabilitation centers, rescue groups, or finding foster families on farms in the area surrounding the IPV shelter are excellent ways to safekeep livestock. <sup>10</sup></p>
	<p>Mental Health Professionals</p>	<p>Suffering abuse in any form, whether it be physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, financial, or witnessing animal abuse, can have severe lasting impacts on the victim. It is recommended that the IPV shelter form partnerships with mental health care providers so these resources can be offered to the victim upon intake.</p>
	<p>Financial Institutions</p>	<p>Survivors of IPV may have suffered from financial abuse. In these cases, the abusive spouse will control and prevent the survivor from accessing little to no money. Forming strategic relationships with financial institutions may serve as an effective way of providing short-term financial assistance to survivors. Corporate Social Responsibility is a growing trend in business culture, and financial institutions are seeking ways to give back to their communities.</p>
	<p>Universities</p>	<p>Universities play a critical role in studying and understanding intimate partner violence and the relationships between different forms of abuse, performing statistical analyses, and identifying gaps in the current system through their research. Building relationships with universities can help improve the level of care provided to survivors of IPV, because the research can inform current practices</p>

		and resources available, enabling the IPV shelter to make informed decisions. Likewise, the IPV shelter can provide useful research data to universities as well.
	Not-for-Profit Organizations Helping Women	Victims of IPV may suffer from multiple forms of abuse. Having additional resources available through partnerships with other women's support organizations can help offer more specialized care to the victim, while also freeing up capacity for the IPV shelter.

Publicizing the pet-friendly program to the community is one of the most effective ways to increase awareness of a pet-friendly program. This can be done by making presentation to local anti-violence coalitions; placing brochures with program partners, and community organizations such as libraries, religious centers, social services agencies, veterinary clinics, hospitals, etc.; advertising in professional newsletters; providing wallet sized cards to law enforcement; commercials and social media campaigns; and through the shelter's website. <sup>10</sup>

## Part 6: Critical Success Factors



Critical success factors include:

- 1) **Relationship-building** – Shelters will need to depend on a network of organizations, such as Animal Welfare Organizations, veterinary services, pet supply companies, and philanthropic resources within local communities, to accommodate pets. These relationships will be vital for gathering supplies and services at discount, gathering information, and implementing best practices for accommodating pets.
- 2) **Education, Training, and Spreading Information** – Shelters, PATHS, SaskSPCA, and STOPS need to work together to create educational resources and provide information to the public, donors, and other institutions, to spread awareness regarding the link between pets and IPV and to garner support for pet-specific programs within both shelters and the province.
- 3) **Collaboration** – There needs to be a greater degree of collaboration between shelters to be able to discover innovative, creative ways to accommodate pets within shelters, especially in areas with limited access to resources.
- 4) **Fund Raising & Donations** – Building strong relationships with donors is critically important for maintaining emergency cash and everyday supplies to keep the program running smoothly. The Program Director should make it a routine part of their week to build these relationships and keep a constant stream of resources available to the shelter.
- 5) **Clear- and Thought-Out Policies** – When accepting animals into the IPV shelter, there is an inherent risk of liability given that some animals may be aggressive from their sustained abuse, or may cause other disturbances such as noise, odor, or allergies. Having clear and well thought out policies will mitigate many of these challenges.



## Part 7: Next Steps

Secondary research has outlined several recommended actions to be taken. This includes:

- On-site support and animal safekeeping. This would provide the most comfort and support for the victims staying in the IPV shelters. <sup>5</sup>
- Streamlining access to animal safekeeping programs. This was a suggested response to the issue of timeliness and accessibility to services. Particularly, streamlining paperwork and the referral process could be done. The aspect of proving ownership is much more difficult. <sup>5</sup>
- More programming. Look for financially feasible and creative ways to increase the amount of space, staff, foster family volunteers, and emergency funding capacity. <sup>5</sup> This might include increasing animal welfare placement options, expanding shelter space, and allowing animals to stay in shelters with their owners or in nearby buildings, and creating facilities to house livestock such as pens and corral areas. <sup>6</sup>
- Creating partnerships. Interagency collaboration helps contribute to the success of animal safekeeping services, e.g., partnerships between veterinary services and social work. <sup>5</sup>
- Education and awareness of available resources. This refers to resources for education and training programs for both service providers and survivors. One suggested a provincial registry of available services. <sup>5</sup>
- Policy change. This includes ensuring anonymity of animal foster homes, implementing measures to ensure the safety of staff members and volunteers, establishing a structured referral process for animal care and safekeeping, and developing formal agreements to handle livestock safekeeping requests. <sup>5</sup> This might also include screening for concurrent animal abuse and animal safekeeping needs happens routinely in situations of IPV. <sup>8</sup>
- Expanding infrastructure. This is an imperative for increasing support capacity, indicating a need for funding to improve response. These recommendations include expanding domestic violence shelter space to include a space for companion animals either within the shelter itself, or a nearby building, creating facilities to house livestock when needed in situations of IPV, finding or creating additional placement options for animal safekeeping, and creating emergency funding to help individuals fleeing IPV to cover transportation, boarding, and vaccination costs for animals. <sup>5</sup>
- Improving safety procedures. Anonymity procedures to protect foster homes, safety procedures for staff and volunteers picking up animals. <sup>6</sup>
- Program awareness. Spreading awareness about available IPV services and animal welfare services. <sup>8</sup>

## **Pet-Friendly Shelter Road Map**

The following “Road Map” is meant to serve as a general implementation plan for building a pet-friendly shelter program. This plan is broken down by what actions are necessary to start-up and maintain the program, and what actions should be taken to build the “ecosystem” surrounding pet-friendly shelters.

### **Phase A: Laying the Foundation**

1. Assemble a Pet-Friendly Planning Committee (PFPC). Ideally, this should consist of experts from a variety of relevant professions, including veterinarians, directors from IPV shelters and provincial associations, university researchers, social workers, and directors of Animal Welfare Organizations such as humane societies or the SaskSPCA.
2. The PFPC determines the vision of the provincial program, and creates some SMART goals and objectives. Establish timelines and the scope of the pet-friendly program that you wish to implement. For example, will you first only consider traditional housepets such as cats and dogs, or will you expand your program to also include other animals such as smaller animals, reptiles, fish, or livestock?
3. Consult with a lawyer familiar in housing law and health and safety regulations to determine that the pet-friendly program has taken into consideration all the relevant laws and regulations. This will be critical information to include in any educational materials that will be developed.
4. Develop educational materials such as information packages, presentations, pamphlets, webinars, etc., to help inform key service providers across the province of the link between IPV and animal abuse.
5. Build key relationships and partnerships early. Partnerships may have already developed during the formation of the Pet-Friendly Planning Committee, but if not, it is recommended to establish formal partnerships with organizations such as the Saskatchewan Veterinary Medical Association, government agencies such as the Ministry of Social Services, and others as detailed in Section 5.7. Additionally, establishing a relationship with housing authorities and offering educational materials/presentations are important steps, as they are responsible for certain second stage housing units, which currently do not allow pets.
6. Develop a marketing and communications plan for IPV shelters, Animal Welfare Organizations, government agencies, police services, veterinarians, etc., to inform them of the new program, and how they can best contact the PFPC for resources. Share with them the educational materials that were developed in step 4.

### **Phase B: Preparing for Launch**

1. Conduct an environmental scan of your community to determine the need for a pet-friendly program, and the resources that you have available to your specific community. This can include opening a dialogue with current and past residents who own(ed) pets and identifying Animal Welfare Organizations, farms, and veterinarians in the area.
2. Identify a Program Director within the IPV Shelter who will champion the pet-friendly program, and be responsible for overseeing the program’s start-up and ongoing operations.

3. Decide which pet-friendly program option is best suited for your shelter. If you decide to choose the in-suite option, it is recommended that the shelter identify which rooms will be considered pet-friendly.
4. Develop the shelter's programs and policies, and ensure that these are shared with shelter staff, volunteers, and residents.
5. Establish a program annual budget that matches the expenses associated with the pet-friendly program model chosen in Step 3 in Phase B.
6. Seek financial support from the community to pay for initial start-up costs such as supplies and capital to make necessary changes to the infrastructure.
7. Promote the program to the community by distributing informational pamphlets, or offering information sessions to the local authorities and social workers in your area. Promote the program on your social media, and on the website.

## Appendix A: Summary of Interview Findings

The purpose of conducting informant interviews is to draw on the individual experience, knowledge, and expertise of those leading similar initiatives such as pet-friendly shelters, to identify best practices. We interviewed four individuals from four pet-friendly shelters across Canada. These organizations are a mix of emergency shelters and second stage housing. Additionally, these shelters cater to various models of pet housing – on-site kenneling and in-room accommodations for pets. The learnings from these shelters can inform and guide the process of setting up pet-friendly shelters and accommodations in shelters across Saskatchewan. In the interviews, individuals had made quite a few references to their policy packages as their answers to certain questions. These are attached to Appendix C of this report.

### Exploration Topic: Shelter Services & Infrastructure

#### **Does your shelter allow pets to stay in rooms with the residents? If not, how does your shelter safekeep the animals?**

Two interviewees said yes.

When asked if their shelter provides indoor/outdoor kenneling, one interviewee said that animals stay within the rooms. They do not have anything specific around kenneling. If a dog gets used to a kennel and they do not have it, the shelter treats it like an essential item, and they can get one through the county-run SPCA program.

Another interviewee said that no, based on current policies. They have made some exceptions based on the pet. For example, there was a woman with an ill hamster, and they allowed her to bring the hamster cage into the room.

Another interviewee said that they have a room that the animals go into until they have a wellness check at the veterinarian. They arrange veterinarian wellness checks within 24-48 hours. The woman and kids can stay with the pets until the wellness check is done. Then the animal goes up with the woman and her family into their actual rooms.

#### **If yes, does your shelter separate pet-friendly rooms from those that are not?**

One interviewee said that they are all treated the same, and they clean in between. For example, if they get someone with an allergy, the room would have been cleaned very thoroughly.

Another interviewee said that they do their best to separate them from non-pet residents. They stay in room whenever possible. Pets need to stay in room. Dogs are muzzled and leashed in common areas. Cats would be in carriers.

When asked if animals are kenneled on site, one interviewee said that they are kenneled on site. They are a new shelter, built in 2011. They had a huge basement and used it to build animal housing on site. It has its own HVAC and its own exits into a pet yard. It is on site but separate from their living areas due to allergies. Sometimes there are religious or cultural reasons why women cannot be around animals, so they are trying to respect the women and children that they serve and trying to be as inclusive

as possible. It is on site and in the basement. If a woman comes in with a pet, they have a protocol to ensure that the pet is safe, but it is housed in the pet housing area in the basement.

**Does your shelter use a separate ventilation system for pet-friendly rooms?**

One interviewee said they use the same ventilation system.

Another interviewee said that they are an old century home, so they use every inch of space they can for their clients. The animals share certain spaces, the animal cannot go into certain spaces in the shelter and in certain hours. The animals can be off leash in the living room after 10 PM after the kids are in beds. There are different regulations for different locations in the shelter.

One interviewee said no. Clients take dogs out regularly. Both houses in their organization have a dog run (no more than 2 hours in run).

**Does your shelter have separate entrances and exits for those with pets?**

One interviewee said that they go in and out of the same doors.

Another interviewee said no, it is just the same for everyone. It is a luxury to have the space to be able to designate and be specific, but do not worry about it and it is entirely workable even if shelters do not have extra space.

One interviewee said no. When asked if their shelter provides indoor/outdoor kenneling, the interviewee said that they have kennels on hand for when residents go out.

When asked to describe the layout of their shelter, another interviewee said when you walk into pet housing, there is a living room space with a sofa, a TV, access to internet, then there is a supply room behind a closed door. Then they have a dog run area, which houses up to four dogs. Then the cat condo area, which is a separate room. Within the cat condo, there is a TV and internet, with chairs, so if a family wants to relax with their cat, they can. With dogs, it is tricky because the dog run area is rather small, and dogs need space. Women can entertain with their dogs in the living room space. Then they have a bathing area, which includes cupboards for women to store food, microwave, fridge, sink set up so that they can be comfy with their pets. They bought a sofa bed downstairs because some pets have a hard time adjusting to the new space, so sometimes the women will sleep down there for a few evenings to make sure their pet feels comfortable.

**Does your shelter have any policies in place for how pets should be handled when outside the room? If yes, can you please share what your policy is?**

One interviewee said that they have nothing officially on paper. They do not have an established pet policy, but they have parameters and guidelines. The expectation is that they are on a leash when they are outside the room, and there are not any pets running around. They do differentiate based on size. They try to accommodate any pet, but it depends on the size of the dog. If it is a larger dog, they are not as able to assist with having them in house. That does not mean that they would not reach out to partners or hotels.

When asked about the area they keep pets in, another interviewee said that they use their main floor washroom because it is quite large. They have a sign on the door saying “pet inside” and that washroom

is out of use while the animal waits for wellness check. The pet is kept inside while they wait for the wellness check. The shelter put a bed in there - it is a big enough room that the woman can sleep if she does not want to leave the animal.

Another interviewee said pets are muzzled and leashed or kenneled in common areas.

One interviewee said that they have policies in place. Policies around health checks that are due before and when pets arrive, and they have an agreement with an animal hospital for free health checks. They have expectations in terms of handling. If you have a dog, you have to take your dog out, etc. They have a camera in the space so we can see if the dog is being brought out each day, because that is important to them. If you bring your animal on site, you are going to care for it as well. If there are issues, and sometimes there is as women who come to their shelter are in crisis, so they will have a conversation with mom around their expectations, and some moms have actually decided to bring their animals to a friend because they have determined that they are not able to take care of themselves and a pet.

**If they face resistance from staff and from clients, what have they done to resolve these objections?**

One interviewee mentioned that no one has vocalized an allergy. Some clients have kids that are scared of the animals. They talk to the families, the pet owner, and the staff involved. It has never been to a state where they could not accommodate the family that was nervous around pets. This shelter does have space (42 beds), so they have space to make it manageable. This shelter asks upon intake for allergies, and they make women fully aware that they do have pets in shelter.

When asked to recount what they did when a woman with a kid scared of dogs came into the shelter, this interviewee said that they brought in a trauma counsellor and had a conversation. To the kid, they said that they don't have to engage with the pet if they feel unsafe, and they are welcome to move to the other side of the room. The individual with the pet was also good about it and said "these are the times I take the dog outside" and stuck to a strict schedule. Eventually, the child did pet the dog and got comfortable. The interviewee addressed that the fear was real and just said that it's okay and the pet owner is responsible. They also said that the kid could talk to the staff who were there if they were scared. The trauma counsellor paid attention to it. They were proactive and had a conversation around it.

Another interviewee said that they started doing this back in 2013. There were questions and concerns. For the most part, because they had been sneaking animals into the shelter unofficially, the staff were mostly on board. Because there could have been issues, the interviewee had arguments prepared for it, and there were very few issues in the end. As long as the shelter has their answers, problem-solve, and strategize in advance, those issues can be avoided. The shelter did staff training on the advantages and benefits, to both pets and humans, and it became a moot point in the shelter. In some of the other shelters that the interviewee works with, there are ways of overcoming anything.

One interviewee said that the majority of staff are pet friendly. Sometimes clients get nervous, but the shelter tries hard to ensure that those who do not want to come in contact with animals are comfortable.

One interviewee said no. One staff decided to resign when they shared that they were going to have pets on site. This was for cultural reasons, and they could not be around specific types of pets, and they chose to resign because of that.

**How do you orientate new clients when they come to the shelter, so they are aware of pets?**

One interviewee said that they do not have anything on paper, but they have a dialogue and seeing where the client is comfortable. They have not come across the situation yet where someone will not enter the shelter because they are pet friendly. This interviewee also said that they have heard of people being grateful that they are pet friendly, but never anyone who will not enter the shelter because of pets.

Another interviewee said that usually there is a phone orientation, where they provide all the details about the shelter.

One interviewee said that it is part of the intake process. They share that information on the crisis line. When they do the in-person intake, they share that as well. They also do a house tour. They probably would not bring them to the pet housing area if they do not have pets. It is just the women who have pets that have access to the area, but they inform them prior to intake in case of allergies or religious reasons.

**How accepting have neighbours been with pets?**

One interviewee said that they are fortunate that their location is set in between three other larger apartment complexes. They are their own neighbour because their emergency shelter and second stage shelter are beside each other, and they only have one residential neighbour that they share a back fence with. Even with that, they have a garage that separates between, so the residential area is not directly connected to them. Otherwise, no one has raised an issue with noise.

Another interviewee said there have been no issues.

One interviewee said that the neighbours are good. Pets are typically calm and don't cause disturbances.

Another interviewee said that they just recently purchased the property right next to them, but prior to that, no complaints.

**What types of pets have you accepted into your shelter? What is the frequency of different types of animals coming into the shelter?**

One interviewee said that they have accepted reptiles, cats, dogs, birds in cages, mice, lizards, and fish.

Another interviewee said that they have the luxury of a second outreach building a block away from the shelter. Turtles cannot come into their shelter, so they send them to the other location where they can be put in terrariums, because of a salmonella issue and having to get kids to wash their hands. They house the turtles in a different building. In terms of everything else, the shelter will give it a shot. If it is a boa constrictor or a tarantula, for example, they have staff who say they will not go into a room with a tarantula. The shelter connects with a pet store that specializes in spiders and snakes, and they can recommend what the best and safest terrariums are to keep the animals so that

they cannot escape. The shelter has always said that staff do not have to go in the room if they are not comfortable with an animal in the room, as they do periodic room checks. They do not have to be the staff to conduct the room check if they are uncomfortable. No staff is expected to be in direct contact with any animals that they are uncomfortable with. This shelter never had a snake or a tarantula. Making sure that there is a comfort level that nothing will escape is good for staff.

When asked how many animals the shelter can accommodate, they said that they have no limit in their policy; rather, common sense and flexibility prevails. One example was when one woman had three large Newfoundland dogs, and the shelter did not have a room to accommodate her, so they helped her out offsite, partnering with safe pet. In terms of numbers, shelters really have to look at what makes sense. It is not as if animals are running rampant, but sometimes they do not have space with animals going up and down the stairs. They look at it on a case-by-case basis, and assess children, size of animals, number of animals. The more children a shelter has the less animals they can have, just in the hallways and things like that. They just use common sense.

When asked about client feedback, one interviewee said that there is much relief from clients because they can bring the animal with them, which is “good for their souls.”

Another interviewee said they mostly have cats and dogs. They also accept pocket pets. They will not accept lizards or reptiles (because they shed their skin and can cause major diseases) and you have to be extremely careful how you handle them, and they cannot play with that in a communal living environment.

#### Exploration Topic: Finances

#### **What fundraising or other revenue generating activities/project have you engaged in to pay for the pet friendly shelters?**

One interviewee said that there is no fundraising for this program. They do have other fundraisers throughout the year, but none for this program specifically. The funds that they use for this program would come out of operations the same way if a woman needed assistance with getting a suitcase, for example. This comes out of operation stuff. For example, if a child needed a backpack for back to school, they would support them with that. This interviewee also mentioned that there is a shelter in their location that has a legal program - if women are in a domestic violence situation, they help them move the pet from the situation and get it placed elsewhere.

Another interviewee said the cost of having the pets involved is very minimal, so they have not done any fundraising or looked for grants, because they are integrated into the shelter as members of the family. There are sometimes expenses. They had one situation where a dog chewed through a door. The shelter took care of the cost to repair the damage, the same way they had paid for repairs when a child had destroyed a bedroom. It is a part of being in the business. Other than that, people who know they are pet-friendly come and donate to them usually. The shelter runs it as a home. If a shelter has a larger space and they want to put up a fence, they have two populations of people to solicit from: pet-care sector, and the violence against women (VAW) sector. If the shelter approaches the topic as the benefits of having women in the shelter with their pets, they can direct your fundraising initiatives toward the VAW sector. If they approach it from the animal violence link, and that they are actually

protecting the animals from violence and being left at home with the perpetrator to be used as a tool, they can approach the pet sector. If they need money to start up a shelter like this, it is not a hard sell to do. Because of these two different sectors, people are listening. This is the way people want things to run. People are realizing that it's reducing barriers, they realize that it saves the lives of pets and women. Once a shelter starts getting literature, stats, and stories out there, the interviewee has not heard of anyone who has not been able to get the money to get the renovations needed.

One interviewee said that most supplies come from donations. The Rotary Club gave money to convert housing, a local engineering firm donated time to install pet run, and a building supplier donated dog run materials.

Another interviewee said that they were fortunate to get huge donations from the Donner Foundation. They also did a community fundraiser where they secured a lot of money for the project. They applied for grants. They did a big fundraiser. In terms of sustaining, the area does not cost a lot of money right now. Initially, for startup, they had to build the site because it was an open basement – they had to install separate ductwork, and ventilation. The building of the area was expensive, it cost almost \$200,000 in total because they have to install an exterior and ensure that the pet area was safe. There was not much extra in hydro. The pet food was donated through the community. They receive so much community support. The donor database has increased since they had pet housing on site. They are impressed that the shelter is supporting animals on site, and they are one of the few to do so.

**How much did it cost for you to start up the program? What types of costs did you have?**

One interviewee said that it depends on the model that a shelter is wanting to do. For them, it is very minimal cost. They look at how they support the dog if they do not have everything they need. If a shelter is building a kennel or outdoor dog run, it might be more expensive. For them, it is low cost, and it makes sure families are feeling supported. If a shelter is adjusting your space completely for it, it might be more expensive.

Another interviewee said that it did not really cost them anything to start up. If you bring it in as a part of the family, it is cheaper than bringing it a child because you have to feed a child. Typically, people feed their own pets. Typically, people come in with donations. If a woman cannot afford it, the shelter has donations that they use to buy pet food. They go to local humane societies for supplies, food, etc. (collar, leash, toys) because these places get regular donations and they have supply closets. They have had people living in their cars before coming to the shelter who did not have any of these for their pets. They dip into donations if they have to, but most often it has been through the goodness of the local humane society who go into their supply closets and say “we’ve got a bed, litter trays, etc.” The interviewee could not give an idea because it is free to them. What is it going to cost to fence the property? What is it going to cost if they want to do everything, and so they build the plans. Shelters that are just normal homes, like the interviewee’s shelter, there was nothing that they had to do.

One interviewee said that costs included extra cleaning supplies, smaller things that were nothing major to purchase (i.e. muzzles).

### **How much does the program cost you on a monthly/annual basis?**

One interviewee said that some costs include food support, and they can tap into donations if they say there is a dog in need at the shelter. They try to consider the dog's vaccinations and they have a lot of pets at the shelter at that time; this is a cost that they can possibly cover through the client support piece. In their location, they have a local dog food store, and they donate dog food to the shelter. They know the shelter, so if the shelter is stuck or need a specific food, they just call the owner of that store. Clients usually feed their own dogs. Sometimes an ongoing issue can be cleaning up after the pet after its outside. Usually, people are good at walking their animal. From a second-stage perspective where people stay for longer terms, a larger dog is something the staff assesses. There could be costs with damage in the unit, but usually the dogs are very well behaved. The reclamation on the rooms after the dog leaves is some cost.

Another interviewee said that they rely on donations (food, equipment, materials). It does not cost a lot to operate. The veterinarian could be highest cost, so a shelter may need to partner with several.

### **Have you been successful in gathering supplies for free (donated) or at a reduced rate?**

One interviewee said they only had to reach out to the community four times for help. They typically have lots of stuff donated, sometimes people come with their own stuff. If they put out a community post saying they have a dog and need a leash, the community will fill that need. Some donations are easier to get other than others. It is mostly the community donating over organizations. For the most part, donors will drop it off. Typically, the ask put into the community is filled in quickly. They sometimes get too many donations. If the need is very specific, they would reach out to companies.

Another interviewee said that it is either donated or covered through donations that they have accumulated. They are not donations that they had to go out and get. Additionally, when talking about the health and welfare of animals, there are expenses, but the connections a shelter makes in the community are critical. The shelter has a network of groomers, sometimes animals come to them with conditions that are not healthy, such as matted hair, not bathed, and fleas. If a shelter has a network of volunteer groomers, or even if a groomer will do it at a low cost, but if someone can get a support network for their shelter, there are a lot of things for the animals that are donated. The interviewee's shelter has groomers that will do it for free or low cost. The thing that can sometimes get expensive is medical care. In Ontario, they have the Farley Foundation. It is a branch of the Ontario Veterinary Medical Association, which covers the costs of serious emergency care for animals who cannot cover it. The veterinarians will usually apply to this foundation for the shelter or give them the services at cost. The connections a shelter makes can really help them do a lot for the animals.

Another interviewee said yes.

One interviewee said that their supply room is on overload. All they do is put out the ask on their website, which is awesome because sometimes women do not come with a lot of supplies, and they are going to give them the food and any other items they need. They always have them on hand. There was a huge donation from an individual. Community members are keen on donating. They had one

donor that had contacts with grocery stores, and they learned that if there is a rip in a bag, they give it away and this individual collects it.

**Have you been successful in acquiring veterinary services for free or at a reduced rate?**

One interviewee said they have never come across that situation, so they can't speak to it. They usually have had animals come in with their shots. When asked about the type of health information that they request from owners, they said that no paperwork is required.

Another interviewee said that they have an arrangement with local veterinarian clinics where they donated their services to do the wellness checks. If there is anything over and above a wellness check to do, the shelter negotiates costs. Sometimes they cover it, sometimes the staff does. If the woman can afford it, sometimes she will cover it. The shelter can do it within 24-48 hours because the veterinarians that they have this arrangement with have agreed to give priority to these women's animals. When asked if the veterinarian comes to the shelter to do the wellness check, the interviewee said no.

Another interviewee said yes.

One interviewee said the health checks are free. They have a partnership with an animal hospital. As soon as we get a new pet, they make arrangements for the health check. They give the shelter a certain number of spays and neuters free each year, and they give us free vaccines. The animals travel to the veterinarian to receive treatment. The shelters pay for transportation to and from, if mom does not have her own vehicle.

**Does your organization receive grant funding to support this program? Are you aware of any grants that provide funding to support similar programs?**

One interviewee said that they have never applied for it.

When asked if they can think of any grant funding source, another interviewee said that PetSmart, pet food companies, local brands, and humane societies help shelters figure out who the big corporate funders are. Googling the grants and pet food companies, all the brands, whatever brands are local is helpful.

Another interviewee said most of their funding came from the Donner Family. They did a mailout during 2018 that gave us lots of extra money for the program. Also, they identified PetSmart Canada as a funding source. When asked how the shelter spread the word about the pet program, the interviewee said there is a Link conference that happens annually. It speaks to the link between pets and women and children, so they had staff represent IHO at that conference. They also have a community engagement member that speaks to animal housing on site to the community, as well as their staff, they do a lot of speaking events, and they share what they do, and their website includes all things animal related. Whenever there is an opportunity for them to engage the greater community or do a public speaking event, they rarely say no. They are quick to respond and say yes.

**Did your insurance premiums increase with accepting pets on-site?**

One interviewee said that they are not aware of any increase. It is not a question their insurance providers have asked.

Another interviewee said that they were unsure if they added any additional insurance.

One interviewee said no. If there was an increase, it was very small.

Exploration Topic: Program Policies

**Does your shelter have a designated program director/coordinator? Does your program have additional staff or volunteers? Do you look after more than one shelter? What training would they require and where did they get that training?**

One interviewee said that it is the shelter manager. They do not even call it a program, it is just an accommodation or a guideline. They also have two supervisors that operate underneath that manager. If they do have something controversial, such as five dogs, sometimes they review a situation with the directors and they problem solve. It has only happened once.

Another interviewee said that they have a shelter manager. They consider the animals in shelter just a part of the family. There are challenges. There are women come into the shelter and are not great mums at the time, and they might not be good animal care providers. The shelter educates them and supports them, if they do not provide good care, they discharge the pet. They sign a package when they come into the shelter, the shelter has a package of animal rights when they come into the shelter. Some women bring in their animals in and then neglect their animals, and there are consequences for that. Rather than having problems externally or with staff, some of the problems occur with women. But the shelter's job is to work with the women who have challenging issues, as well as the ones who do not have challenging issues. The shelter sets the guidelines, parameters, and consequences, and they follow through with them same as violating any other rules in the shelter.

One interviewee said that whoever is on shift looks after pets (intake, orientation), but the client is responsible for the pet. Both houses have a house coordinator, but nothing pet specific.

**What types of training do you provide to your staff/volunteers? How do they help assist the program director?**

One interviewee said that they do not use extra volunteers. There is no specific training, but it does align with their trauma-informed training. For example, understanding that pets are family members, etc., and having those gentle conversations, especially around allergies, it is embedding in their trauma informed training.

Another interviewee said that their shelter introduced paperwork in staff meetings, invited the SPCA to initiation meetings, and there was online training and reading material.

**What policies does your shelter have in place for the types, size, and number of pets allowed to be in the shelter?**

When asked if there are any limitations as to which animals they allow in the shelter, one interviewee said no. There are more prompting questions around the animal's temperament, whether or not they are small or large, but it is case by case. They try access their resources to get people a suitable living arrangement for people with large dogs sometimes. They do try to prioritize the needs of the animal too.

Another interviewee said that there are some restrictions, such as dogs over certain weights. They say no to rabbits, large snakes, insects (spiders), and dogs with bad behavior as determined by screening.

**Do you have special policies in place for Abused, Aggressive, or Stressed Pets?**

One interviewee said that it is the initial assessment with the pet. It might be seeking out the county pound services and seeing if they can house them there. There are hotel options too, it is case by case. They would work to find a space to stay that would work for the animal where they do not have to interact with other animals.

Another interviewee said they provide clients with information on helping pets. They will not take any aggressive pets, but work with clients to find alternative arrangements.

**What policies does your shelter have in place for noise, allergies, and odors from pets? Have you experienced many challenges?**

When asked how their shelter deals with allergies, one interviewee said that according to their insurance company, there is no additional liability. They make sure that all women, before they come in the shelter, when they are at the crisis call stage, they let women know that there will be animals on site and that is the reality of that shelter. They will connect them to other shelters that do not have pets if they have allergies or do not want to be around animals. The shelter has the luxury of other shelters within an hour of their location, so they feel that they can do that.

Additionally, they put a policy in place for employees. There was the initial employee phase, then all new applications were told that it was pet-friendly. A condition of employment was that it is a pet-friendly shelter and there will be animals here. By taking this job, the individual is agreeing that this is okay with them. The initial transition phase was where issues had to be resolved. At this point, If someone mentioned they had allergies and could not work with animals, the plan was to cover the cost of an allergy specialist to do thorough testing and identify whether they could not even be in the building when an animal was on-site, or whether they could work shifts, how many shifts they could work, what cleaning had to take place, and whatever else the allergy specialist recommended. The shelter would develop an accommodation plan for the staff with allergies. Most of the staff that had allergies did not take up the offer on bringing in a specialist. Most shelters have found that people say they have allergies, and when they offer to have the testing done and offer it as a condition of employment, it becomes less of an issue.

One interviewee said that they do a thorough clean of room when guest leaves. Clients are responsible for their own laundry and picking up after their animals.

**What policies does your shelter have in place for keeping pets and their owners safe and secure within the shelter?**

One interviewee said that they must be on a leash or in a kennel outside of the unit, and make sure that the owners are cleaning up (the shelters provide bags for them to do that). The staff talk to the individual about expectations if the noise or safety becomes a concern. It is in that initial conversation. If something goes in a way they are not expecting, the staff make sure they know their options.

**What does your shelter do to protect other residents from the risk of pet attacks within the shelter?**

One interviewee said they use muzzles.

**What policies does your shelter have in place for animals that are abandoned?**

One interviewee said that they would try to talk to the individual and if they were not returning calls, it would be a call to the animal enforcement services. The shelter would think about if other family members could take the pet. The pet could stay with someone else, and the owner would visit, or the dog could come and visit. When asked about what the shelter does if residents leave their pets alone, the interviewee said that it is usually cats and birds. The staff will ask they are kenneled if they are used to being kenneled. If they are leaving, the staff ask their return time (approximately), identify if they need support, and they make sure that the other staff knows in the meantime.

Another interviewee said that SPCS is called.

**What policies do you have in place for damages to the property from the pet?**

One interviewee said they have not had much damage to note, they have had more damage from clients than pets.

**What are your policies to enforce responsible pet care?**

One interviewee said that they have the pet agreement signed by the client.

**Can the residents of the shelter leave their pet in the room when they leave?**

One interviewee said that residents can leave for a short amount of time and leave their pet behind. They also found that clients use each other to help look after pets.

**What is the basic health information you require before the pet is permitted on the premises? If they do not have this information on-hand, what policies do you have in place to mitigate the risk of disease? How are you controlling for disease transmission?**

One interviewee said that pet records are rare on intake. The shelter will help with vaccinations or getting veterinarian records.

Exploration Topic: Legal

**What legal/regulatory challenges or barriers did your organization face when developing this program?**

One interviewee mentioned that they have had to support women when they had legal issues over custody of pets.

Another interviewee mentioned that this is one of the big issues that most people say. The interviewee could not find any regulations that said they could not: fire department, public health inspectors, nobody.

One interviewee mentioned the city bylaws on pets (number, noise restrictions).

Another interviewee said there has not been any legal challenges to their knowledge.

**Does your shelter ask clients to sign waivers during the intake process to protect against potential liability?**

One interviewee said no, but they use an expectations sheet.

Another interviewee said owners maintain full responsibility of pet. There is a waiver signed. Also, pets do not interact.

**Have you seen legal issues with ownership of the animals? E.g., Perpetrator shows up with court order proving ownership.**

One interviewee said that they have never had anyone show up at the shelter demanding an animal be turned over. One perpetrator had asked for children, so they ask them to show up with legal representations and rights (i.e. lawyer). Depending on the violence level of the person, they would handle it differently. One time, they had one lady that had legal evidence that she was the owner of a pet and their community support team called and used the RCMP to go back to the house and take the pet from her house. The pet was brought to her. The perpetrator did not fight the RCMP on it. The shelter has had a lot of reports of clients staying because the perpetrator tries to hurt their pet.

Another interviewee said that this a legitimate concern. It has not happened since 2013, but they do not know that it will not. In custody battles with kids, they go through the court of law, but with animals, there is no written rule. If the perpetrator goes to the police and says it is their animal, then it is between the woman and the perpetrator and the police. And then the shelter will do what the police say. On the other hand, the shelter does not make the woman do anything just because a guy or woman shows up at the door saying, "I want my dog back." If the perpetrator comes with papers, then the shelter will help the women make a decision of what to do. It is not the shelter's call to hand over anything, but the woman is their client. So, they would get the police in to do whatever they think is best, but it is not their call. But at least they would know that there was some justification for him being at the door. They have had perpetrators demand a car back, and it is the same thing – go get papers.

One interviewee said that they have not had that happen in their time at the organization. It's extremely rare – they have so much security and cameras too.

**Have you ever been subject to legal action? E.g., a resident's child is bitten by a dog, and wants to sue. If yes, what was the outcome? How did you handle the situation?**

One interviewee said no. Part of the package that the woman signs at intake is acknowledging there are rules and regulations, that she has to play her part, and that she understands there are animals at the shelter. Residents can either stay away or approach the animal. There are animal-free places in the

shelter that women know, such as washrooms, kitchens, bedrooms, etc. Once they sign the waivers, there is an understanding that the woman should stay away if she is not comfortable. If she does not stay away, there is a possibility that she could get bitten. The shelter also educates people when they come in (i.e. puppy teething vs. dog bite). Sometimes the shelter requests the animal wears a muzzle and be on leash because they are scary animals. The shelter just uses common sense and they make people as comfortable as possible (i.e. in the room, no muzzle, but in hallway and stairway, wear a muzzle). If someone had a dog with that reputation, they ask that humane, proper muzzles be used. If they choose to go in the yard and if they are alone and someone comes in, they can put the muzzle on or the other woman can choose to stay away. The women who come into the shelter are treated like adults and can make their own decisions. That is not to say that the shelter will not get sued, but they have done due diligence. They set rules and parameters around everything in place. They are going to sue no matter if they are litigious, but all a shelter can do is their due diligence and believe that having animals at the shelter and doing the best they can to keep everyone safe.

Another interviewee said no because it is only the residents that come with a pet that have access to pet housing. If there is a child from another family that wants to visit a dog, then they have a conversation with mom and make sure they know it is on her. It is typically just the family that visits with their pet downstairs.

#### Exploration Topic: Partnerships

#### **Has your organization partnered with any Animal Welfare Organizations, SPCAs, Humane Societies, or Veterinarians?**

One interviewee said that they did have one with the previous local SPCA before it closed. They also have something called Bandaged Paws, and it is not official partnership, but they have always said they can help in accommodating large animals, maybe at a discounted rate. They do have some unofficial relationship with a local dog food store. One time they had a pet issue and called some pet care givers and they gave us the staff some awesome advice. PetSmart has also donated to them before.

Another interviewee said that because they cannot bring in all animals all the time, sometimes they are full, and have no more room for animals to safely come in. They are a member of the local Safe Pet program. It's a provincial program run by the Ontario Veterinary Medical Association. It provides pet fosters while the women are in shelter. Other members include local humane societies, animal control; they are all part of the same network. If a woman needs to give up her animal, they know the people at the humane society that can facilitate a soft transfer. One of the humane societies has a bedroom on site, where the woman can stay there with the animal. They have collaborations between a number of shelters and all their animal services people. Partnerships are key in making this work.

When asked if animals go to Animal Welfare Organizations if they are stressed or abused, the interviewee said the shelter will not recommend animals are handed over to AWOs, but instead the client is educated on their options. Some women do not want to give up their pets. When a person takes a pet to the humane society, it is because they are leaving the shelter and they are moving into a residential set up and they have to give up the animal in order to get second stage housing. Sometimes women who are leaving the shelter cannot take their pets, so they have no-kill shelters, and animal

protection services, and Safe Pet programs to do long-term fostering. It is case by case, and letting the woman make the decision of what is best for her and her animal.

One interviewee said that veterinarians donate first shots and time at a discount. Food is often donated. Pet owners often bring their own food. They go to multiple veterinarians. Pets are transported to the veterinarian's office. SPCA was a partner before they started pet-friendly shelters.

Another interviewee mentioned the animal hospital that they have partnered with.

**If yes, what type of relationship does your shelter have with the AWO? What functions/roles/services to they provide?**

One interviewee said that veterinarians typically provide first visit and vaccinations free.

Another interviewee said that they work with Safe Pet, but in terms of stats and reporting, no.

**Does your organization partner with any provincial/state authorities? If yes, can you please describe the relationship?**

One interviewee said that they have entered into an agreement with the local RCMP detachment and with three other rural detachments. They reserve a room. They have an RCMP and children's room even when they are at maximum capacity. They are at the top of the list for response. If they get the call, they are right there. The shelter is establishing more interaction with the RCMP, like a barbecue, to reduce fear in kids about RCMP. The shelter has a big Indigenous population at their place, and they do not have the best relationship with that. Additionally, the shelter sits on a local collaborative called Impact that looks at eradicating domestic and sexual violence. They work in partnership John Howard Society, education society. There are 8 service providers that sit at that table. They have great connections between nonprofits and municipal governments. For example, in their location, Child and Family Services let the staff know ahead of time before doing client check-ins, so they are prepared to support parents in whatever situations arise. The shelter has a good relationship with a lot of agencies, which gives better support to the clients and staff.

Another interviewee said that all police forces in Ontario are required to have training in human/animal violence link. They work with the police on training and education provincially. They have one expert in the Ottawa force who trains all the police services, so they work with her in terms of education. Some organizations include the Ontario Safe Pet program, Ontario Veterinary Medical Association, etc., so there are provincial programs that the interviewee's shelter links into.

One interviewee said that they partner with police for on-site police reporting, rather than the victim going into the precinct. BC Housing is their main funder.

**Does your organization share information with other agencies, law enforcement, shelters, AWOs, etc. of potential abuse situations?**

One interviewee said no because information sharing is difficult and limited.

Other Comments

One interviewee mentioned that shelters should emphasize how often that women stay in abusive situations due to pets. They say they would have left sooner if pets were not involved. A lot of them fear what would happen to their pets. People do not realize how much of an issue it is. Additionally, some shelters do not feel comfortable writing down policy with pets because they have to follow it. If it's vaguer, the shelter can assess case by case and accommodate people who do not fit the policy. Some shelters see it as red tape.

Another interviewee said that this program is customizable. For example, their northern and Indigenous shelter network have to provide everything themselves, as they don't have opportunities to partner. They have to get more creative. It's a matter of personalizing the program for the way the shelter needs. Additionally, on-site kennel programs have own problems.

One interviewee said that they have found that some non-pet people have become more accepting after the experience, and groomers are an important partner.

Another interviewee said this is one of the best decisions that they have made in a long time to open animal housing on site as there is a need. Covid has changed everything somewhat, even in terms of how many pets they accept because it is a shared space. It is a gift to allow families to come with their pets. In terms of funding dollars, the shelter will see increases.

## Appendix B: Summary of Focus Group Findings

### Warm-Up Questions

#### 1. Have you had any experiences with shelter users bringing pets to the shelter?

One participant said that their shelter has two buildings; one is pet-friendly, while the other is not. The shelter has multiple residents who have pets with them. It is a long-term shelter, so they have their own apartment, so there is no common area to worry about for the pets. The rule is that the pets stay in the apartment, and they are leashed if they go outside for a walk. The participant said they have been advocating for pet-friendly shelters, especially for the long-term shelter, where people stay for two years or more. They should be able to have access to their pets and have their pets with them. Part of it is that the building owners must follow provincial policies.

Another participant said that they had experience with a shelter in Melfort, where that shelter had partnered with veterinary clinics and they would foster the animals in Melfort. In the participant's current location in Northern Saskatchewan, there are so many strays, and their needs are different than the south. There are lots of stray animals with no homes, often in packs. It's a totally different issue.

Another participant has very limited experience, with just one cat and a rabbit. The participant's shelter doesn't announce it. If they call in and they want to come to our shelter and they mention that they have an animal, the shelter wouldn't turn them away because of that. Speaking with staff, the shelter agreed that they wouldn't turn anyone away because of that. The person would have to look after it themselves. When they had the cat and the rabbit at the shelter, the participant never saw them at all, as they were in their rooms. The shelter is fine with it as long as they're responsible.

One participant with an Animal Welfare Organization said that they only limited contact with local safe shelters and service groups. When asked what happens if there is no one to pick it up, the participant said that they never had to leave an animal in their shelter to be adopted out later. The board is willing to take that on if that is the only resolution for that animal, but they love to return animals to the owner. If they're going somewhere for a long time or a short time, the organization would find it a new home if that's what they want.

#### 2. Have you heard of anyone not being able to stay in the shelter as a result of having pets?

One participant said that their shelter has two buildings and provided there were openings, and they knew people had pets, then the shelter would put them in the building with pets. They would put the people that didn't have pets in the building that didn't have pets. So far, they have been lucky in that, but that might not always be the case.

Another participant recalled an instance where they were speaking to a lady that had two very big dogs and the previous director, and maybe even staff, didn't allow animals. These dogs had to go stay with a friend for a while. When the friend got tired of them or couldn't care for them anymore, she had to leave because of that. She left because the dogs could not stay at the friend's and the participant's shelter could not have them there at that time. There is no policy at the participant's shelter that says that they cannot stay here.

### **3. What do you think shelters can do to assist shelter users in accommodating pets?**

One participant said that they do not have a policy for or against having a pet, but maybe having that, or maybe a dog run, or having a specific area set aside that could be used for that type of stuff, may help too.

Another participant mentioned that longer term shelters and housing arrangements should be advocating for having pets because people might be able to give their pets to friends or family for a couple weeks, but not forever. If they are looking for people to stay in second stage shelters for two years or more, or if they want to go out on their own in their own apartment with an outreach worker, those places need to advocate for pets as part of the lease. People might be able to leave their pets for a couple weeks, but they do not want to have to give their pet up or have to go home, so it's important for longer term shelters to advocate for the needs of people who have pets.

Another participant said that they try to work with each client, and go on a client-by-client basis. It is different for everyone, and it does not just fit one person. For the participant's shelter, there is no policy, and nothing written down, so they go case-by-case and client-by-client, and they try to work with them. If they can find someone else, that's okay. A lot of staff are pet friendly, so they would work with that person.

#### **Exploration Topic – Stakeholder's Opinions**

##### **1. How comfortable are people in being in a space that has pets?**

One participant said that couple of staff are terrified of any animal, even tiny dogs. The staff would have an anxiety attack, so it would be a downside if they were not able to work because of that. It's a real fear. It's a bad anxiety and a real fear. They are terrified because they were bit as a child. They lived on the reserve where there are stray dogs in packs who attack people because they're hungry, so if they see a dog, they do not know if it will attack them. That's their fear and the participant said that they can't force them with that.

Another participant said that their staff are really excited and they all pushed for a pet-friendly building, so they are excited to play with them.

In the case of allergies, one participant said that the animal would have to stay in a certain area and they would have to deep clean and sanitize. It could not be going freely around common areas. The woman would have to be responsible. There has to be a specific area.

Another participant agreed, saying that the pets have to stay in their areas. Even if they love animals, they have to stay in their area because it also depends on if there are other families in there with children and how they feel about it. It's about asking everyone in the building "are you okay," especially the little ones. It depends on the attitude and demeanor of the animal. The participant's shelter has a big open space inside, and a big backyard that is fenced in.

One participant said that kids will go to pets no matter what, but sometimes older pets have no patience for little kids.

Another participant said that everyone has their own apartments, so they keep the pets in their own apartments, aside from the hallways where they would be leashed.

### **Exploration Topic - Shelter Infrastructure**

#### **1. What kind of supports would you anticipate that your shelter would need if it were to become pet-friendly?**

One participant mentioned everything they do has to be approved by their senior management and board. So there has to be some sort of policy put in place, and everything has to be outlined. The participant's shelter is located in Northern Saskatchewan, so for supplies, groceries are delivered once a week, and that could be an issue. In the past, they have sent rescue dogs out at no cost through Rise Air. The participant has said that their contact that works there would continue to do that for the shelter and it is good to have those networks. It would have to be approved by board and senior management.

Another participant said that transportation does not apply so much for being in the city. Practically, it makes sense to have a budget for dog or cat food, or if a resident was struggling to feed their animals, or if they were having financial issues, it would be good to have a budget for that to ensure that the animals are properly cared for.

A participant who has experience with an Animal Welfare Organization said that a lot of volunteers will go out of their way to make highway trips to remote communities. They do that whenever there is a wildfire scare or any kind of situation where the animal needs to be placed or put in care. They are good about going to northern communities and leaving supplies if someone is willing to take care of the animal there, and they can hook them up with whatever they need. If it comes down to moving an animal out of their house, or not with their owner, they will make the trip, but it is just a matter of finding out which volunteer would do it fastest. And they would pick up the animal and put it in hold/foster until the home situation is resolved.

When asked about which supplies an IPV shelter should have on hand to take care of an animal, the participant mentioned that they would want a kennel. If they have a fenced-off part of a backyard, maybe consider a space for the kennel there or maybe even a dog run. If they have people with allergies, they got to be able to keep animals away from everyone else who cannot be left alone with the animals. Not all animals are nice, and they have to take that into account. Sometimes the participant's organization has an animal and it is an aggressive dog, it is in shock, away from its owner, in an unfamiliar space. Useful items to have would be food, veterinarian medicines, pain killers in case something happened to the animal, kitten milk, puppy milk, kennels, blankets, bowls, leashes, and anything one gets when you get a new animal, but just tucked away in a bag or a tote.

#### **2. What are the barriers for your shelter to accommodating pets?**

One of the participants worked at Melfort and referenced an instance where a lady had six horses, so that was a big struggle to find housing for those horses, but that's not an everyday thing. They found someone and it was great. The Executive Director networked through friends to find someone who had room in a farm and had bales for the horses. The woman left when the guy went to work for seven days, so the shelter went and picked up the horses during that time.

Another participant referenced barriers including building ownership and having to adhere to their pet-related policies due to ownership status. The participant also mentioned that cost might be a barrier. In their shelter that does allow pets, they do want a non-refundable pet deposit, but that can be a barrier for someone who is struggling financially and can barely pay rent.

### **3. Does your shelter have space to accommodate pets?**

One participant mentioned that there is no space for anything. The participant said that their shelter has six rooms, each room has a bathroom, a common area, kitchen, and a toy room. They are very cramped for space, like every shelter. They have outdoor areas that they could use, with insulated dog houses and dog runs. Also, the animals could come and stay in the rooms. They could put something in the rooms too, like a small kennel, but in terms of a separate area outside of the rooms, they do not have it.

Another participant mentioned that they have a backyard, and they are in a small city, but they do not have the space for anything separate. Maybe a doghouse and a run in the back, but the participant likes the idea of kennels in the room. But even if they said to purchase a kennel for just in case, they do not have room for that. They do not have storage space.

### **Exploration Topic - Shelter Costs and Policies**

#### **1. What kind of policies would best support the accommodation of pets in a shelter?**

When asked what the participant would do in the case of multiple pets, the participant mentioned that it depends on the type of animal, so it is case-by-case. Their work is never black and white, it is always the grey. At the participant's previous shelter, they had the relationship with the veterinarian clinic, and the clients would walk the pets at the clinic. They also found volunteers to take them. The participant's current position in Northern Saskatchewan does not have anything like that, but having that network and relationship with different agencies is really important.

#### **2. Do you anticipate any legal/regulatory challenges to accommodating pets in your shelter?**

One participant with a pet-friendly building said that they have faced no legal challenges yet.

#### **3. What kind of costs do you anticipate will arise for your shelter if it were to start accommodating pets?**

One participant raised concerns about the costs of the veterinarian bill if the animal got hurt by abuser.

Another participant said that If the animal starts creating a mess, does some damage, or hurts a client, the shelter would have to be prepared to find an alternative for that pet, but the shelter would now be on the hook as the host. It can be a huge cost if someone gets hurt by someone else's animal. It's rare and not common, but it is a risk.

Another participant wondered if they could get waivers to protect themselves from the situation described above. But if it does damages to the building, that is on the shelter.

## Exploration Topic - Partnerships

### 1. Do you think that there are any potential partnerships that can assist your shelter with caring for pets/livestock?

One participant said that budgets are an issue, and there is never enough money, so helping for food, supplies, veterinarian bills, kennels, etc. and that type of stuff.

Another participant said that veterinarians could donate a portion of a bill or an entire bill for residents of a shelter, or they could call out and come to the shelter instead of the resident having to go to the clinic. Partnering with people like humane societies, and SPCAs, to help lobby to the provincial government for the importance of having pet-friendly shelter available is some of the best partnerships that they could make.

Another participant mentioned veterinarian bills and boarding an animal if they are too big. Anything would be helpful.

In terms of resources, assistance, and partnerships, a participant with experience in an Animal Welfare Organization said that they have a first responder mentality when it comes to fleeing abuse situations. The participant and seventeen women, a lot of whom are in justice, social work, are the participant's board members and volunteers. They understand what it means to drop everything and help an animal. It's the community mentality, and you help in any way you can, you do not look at the cost or the timeframes, but you just help. The olive branch is always there to the safe shelter, for families, and in terms of getting anything back for it, just a thank you. That is as far as it goes.

### 2. Do you think it will be difficult to fundraise in your community for pet-related needs that could arise in your shelter? Explain.

One participant mentioned that in Saskatchewan, second stage shelters are not provided operational funding from the provincial government, so they are constantly fundraising. The challenge is just keeping operations running. They do not fundraise for pet-friendly needs, it would be just for keeping staff and have the building open. They can probably use fundraising funds for those needs, but the participant said that they cannot see in the future that they would do pet-specific fundraising.

Another participant said that there is not a lot of employment in their location in Northern Saskatchewan. A lot of people are on assistance, so the participant is not sure how fundraising would go.

Another participant said that it is something that they could try, but lots of people fundraise in their town for everything. It is something they could look at.

### 3. What do Animal Welfare Organizations have in terms of resources to assist shelters?

One participant with experience with an Animal Welfare Organization said that currently, their humane society has a very healthy operating budgets for a variety of social programs. A lot of annual fundraisers do well because they have a good reputation in the community and the region, and they have a big Facebook presence, and it reaches across the province. That notoriety has given them a lot of goodwill and they get a lot of supplies and donations from the city and other rescues.

The participant said that they like to dump all the food, veterinarian care, time, and energy into people who need those services, and people in a bad place. Their organization has more resources to give them than the government does sometimes, and they have more people willing to take animals, time, and money that they would throw at that problem. If anything, people don't come calling enough. They try to distribute them to other shelters and people in the communities. The RCMP have their number. Not all shelters can do that though.

The participant also mentioned have a network of people who are willing to help them and take in animals when they need to. A lot of RM people will accept livestock or go to farms to capture them. They have people they call on that would do it for the people that need it.

When asked what approach they took to bring in livestock, the participant said that they send people to the farm because animals are best left where they have always lived. If they need veterinary care, that is the only occasion where the organization would make any kind of arrangements, but it is rare that they cannot just send someone with some bales and sometimes medicine. They have good local veterinarians that will assist them whenever they need it. But they do not like to take the animals off the property ever, they usually just look after them where the animal is comfortable.

When asked about pet safety, the participant said that it has not come up. Their organization is usually called after the threatening party leaves from the property, or after they have left the picture.

**4. Does your AWO or veterinarian clinic have the capacity to provide services or shelter animals if a shelter reaches maximum capacity with clients' pets?**

The participant mentioned that there are times of the year, such as late fall and early winter, when the shelter is full. If that is the case, they reach out to their network. They will find someone with an acreage who has room for the dogs, and they will always try to keep them all together. You can't close your doors if someone is trying to get out of a situation, and you make the space. Not all shelters can do that because of operating and funding agreements, so they may have to close their doors. The participant's organization and their network all stay in cahoots in case of an overflowing situation, and other rescues can help when they can. It is all hands on deck when people need it.

## Appendix C: Sample Forms and Other Documents

The following forms, waivers, policies, and other documentation were provided by the Ann Davis House and Interval House of Ottawa with the explicit consent from both parties to use the documents herein as examples for the purposes of this report.

The forms provided to Praxis from the Interval House of Ottawa are dated to July 5, 2021.



### Pet Housing Volunteer Acknowledgement Form

As a volunteer working in the pet housing area, I agree to release Interval House of Ottawa (IHO) from responsibility for incidents beyond their scope of responsibilities.

Support with caring for another's pet(s) may involve a risk of injury and IHO accepts no responsibility for such related risks.

I have read and fully understand the contents of this caregiving arrangement and I sign it freely and voluntarily.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Staff member supervising (print): \_\_\_\_\_



## Expectations of Pet Care Agreement

IHO residents are responsible for the day-to-day care of their pet(s). You can help us to ensure the safety and health of your pet(s) by agreeing to the following rules regarding their care. You agree to:

- Provide appropriate food and access to water;
- Give the pet enough to do every day that the pet stays fit and stimulated and does not become distressed or bored. This includes:
  - Enough physical stimulation (exercise, scratching, etc.) to satisfy its individual behavioural needs;
  - Access to safe toys and suitable objects to play with and chew;
  - Lots of opportunities for socialization and to play with its family.
- Provide any medication;
- Clean the cage or pet housing unit regularly;
- Clean the litter box daily;
- Walk dogs in safe areas and clean up after them;
- Protect your pet from pain and suffering, which includes:
  - Keeping your pet away from situations where they could be accidentally hurt (e.g. in the parking lot);
  - Never using harsh, potentially painful or frightening methods of behaviour control or punishment.
- Provide ample opportunity to urinate/defecate in appropriate locations;
- Supervise your pet while they are with you on IHO property:
  - Pets must stay in the designated pet housing areas of IHO (i.e. the basement pet housing area, outdoor exercise yard);
  - When outside of their housing unit, pets must be supervised. This includes the outdoor exercise yard;
  - Pets must be in their designated housing unit when not with you;
  - Dogs must be leashed at all times when out of their designated housing area, except in the outdoor exercise yard.

- Provide appropriate care and supervision when away from the shelter:
  - Residents are expected to make arrangements with another resident to care for their pet when they will be away from the shelter without their pet (e.g. overnights).
- Notify staff if a pet needs veterinary care.

*Note: The security cameras in the pet housing area are not intended for staff to provide constant monitoring of pets staying at IHO.*

I understand and agree to the agreement outlined above to ensure the safety and health of all pets at IHO.

Intake Within 48 Hours

Resident: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



ann davis transition society

**Ann Davis Transition Society**

## **Non-Pet Owner Contract**

### **Intent**

Recognizing the bond between people and their pet companions, understanding the role pet companions can play in providing comfort and the ability to cope with trauma or stress, and supporting animal welfare, Ann Davis Transition Society is proud to welcome pet companions into its temporary residences. To ensure the safety of our staff, clients and their pet companions, all clients must agree and adhere to the following rules.

### **Allowable Pets**

Ann Davis Transition Society allows pets that may be a bird, a rabbit, a ferret, or other caged pets such as rodents (gerbil, hamster etc.). A small bowl or tank of fish no bigger than 5 litres, a cat, or a dog weighing 20kg or less (except a vicious or dangerous dog). Any pets other than these require prior written approval from the Coordinator or the Director of Housing.

### **Prohibited Pets**

Ann Davis Transition Society does not allow farm animals, livestock or animals intended for human consumption, reptiles or exotic animals like alligators, turtles, lizards, spiders. Wild animals such as but not limited to; squirrels monkeys, or raccoons. Any animal requiring a heat lamp. Ann Davis Transition Society does not allow pets that are illegal. Hybrids between domesticated and wild animals are not permitted (i.e. Bengal cats, dogs that are part wolves, etc.)

### **Pet Related House Rules**

1. Ann Davis Transition Society does not permit pets that show signs of aggression or pose a danger to other pets, clients or staff in any manner.
2. Non-pet owners are not obligated to share a room with a pet and their human companion.
3. Pets, where applicable, should be neutered or spayed.
4. Up to date with all necessary vaccinations.
5. Free of ticks, fleas, and mites.
6. All cats and dogs will be required to receive Veterinary approved prophylaxis treatment for fleas upon arrival and on-going while residing in a safe house. (flea collars and non-veterinary products are not sufficient)
7. All pets must always remain under supervision of their human companions.
8. Pets may not be left unattended for long periods.
9. Staff and other residents do not provide pet minding.
10. Kennels and crates will be provided for pet transportation and housing pets.
11. Pets are never allowed in the kitchen, food storage or food preparation areas.
12. Pets are not permitted to roam freely around the house, and they are not permitted in the common areas even with their human caretaker.



ann davis transition society

13. In the case of a family, a primary adult pet caretaker must be identified.
14. When pets are being transported to the designated pet area in the backyard, or off premises, they must be in a cage or kennel, or on a leash.
15. Dogs must be leashed and have on a muzzle when being transported through common areas (when physically possible).
16. Pets are not permitted in the designated outdoor smoking area or children's play area.
17. All pets (including cats) must be leashed when in outdoor areas on the property.
18. Residents are fully responsible for the health and wellbeing of their pets including food, medication, bathing, cleaning up after the pets, taking pets out for exercise and walks, and ensuring that their living area and the house stays clean and odour free.
19. In the event of an emergency or evacuation, pet companions will be the responsibility of their owners.
20. Residents must refrain from handling, petting or feeding pets without the expressed consent of that pet's human companion.
21. Residents are not encouraged to introduce their children to other resident's pet companions, if this is done it is at their own risk.
22. Residents must make staff aware of any pet related allergies, fears or phobias.
23. Residents are expected to report any concerns or incidents relating to pets to a staff member immediately.

I understand that Ann Davis Transition Society safe houses are pet friendly. I have advised the staff of any potential or actual allergies, phobias, fears or other concerns relating to pets to the best of my knowledge. I promise to adhere to this policy during my stay.

I have been informed by Ann Davis Transition Society staff of the risks associated with being around pet companions including zoonosis.

Client Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Client Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Staff Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ ID# \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## Pet Agreement for Ann Davis Society Safe House

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Notice to the pet owner/guardian: please read carefully. This agreement includes a release of liability and waiver of legal rights and deprives you of the right to take legal action against Ann Davis Transition Society and related parties. Do not sign this agreement unless you have read it in its entirety and understand its effect, policies, procedures, waiver of liability, assumption of risk, and indemnification agreements.

In consideration for my pet(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
Name(s) of pet(s)  
being permitted to reside with me at an Ann Davis Transition Society safe house as a pet companion, and by signing this document, I \_\_\_\_\_ Owner/Guardian,  
make the following representations, certify the accuracy of all information provided to Ann Davis Transition Society at any time, and agree to all the following policies, procedures, terms and conditions stated below in this Ann Davis Transition Society Pet Agreement.

Client's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Pet Species: \_\_\_\_\_

Breed (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

### ***Allowable Pets***

Ann Davis Transition Society allows pets that may be a bird, a rabbit, a ferret, or other caged pets such as rodents (gerbil, hamster etc.). A small bowl or tank of fish no bigger than 5 litres, a cat, or a dog weighing 20kg or less (except a vicious or dangerous dog). Any pets other than these require prior written approval from the Coordinator or the Director of Housing.

### ***Prohibited Pets***

Ann Davis Transition Society does not allow livestock or animals intended for human consumption, reptiles or exotic animals like alligators, turtles, lizards, spiders, wild animals such as squirrels monkeys, or raccoons, or any animal requiring a heat lamp. Ann Davis Transition Society does not allow pets that are illegal. Hybrids between domesticated and wild animals are not permitted (i.e. Bengal cats, dogs that are part wolves, etc.)



### ***Pet Related House Rules***

1. All cats and dogs will be required to receive Veterinary approved prophylaxis treatment for fleas upon arrival and on-going while residing in a safe house. (Flea collars and non-veterinary products are not sufficient)
2. All pets must always remain under supervision of their human companions.
3. Pets may not be left unattended.
4. Staff and other residents do not provide pet minding.
5. Kennels and crates will be provided for pet transportation and housing pets.
6. Pets are never allowed in the kitchen, food storage or food preparation areas.
7. Pets are not permitted to roam freely around the house, and they are not permitted in the common areas even with their human caretaker.
8. In the case of a family, a primary adult pet caretaker must be identified.
9. Pets are not permitted in the designated outdoor smoking area or children's play area.
10. All pets (including cats) must be leashed when in outdoor areas on the property.
11. In the event of an emergency or evacuation, pet companions will be the responsibility of their owner.
12. Safe house residents must refrain from handling, petting or feeding pets without the expressed consent of that pet's human companion.
13. Residents are responsible to advise staff of any pet related allergies, fears or phobias.
14. Residents are expected to report any concerns or incidents relating to pets to a staff member immediately.

### ***Ownership***

I certify that I am the owner/guardian of the above named pet(s). I understand that Ann Davis Transition Society employees are not responsible to verify the ownership of my pet. I agree to disclose any abuse my pet may have experienced from another individual. I agree to disclose to Ann Davis Transition Society staff if I am protecting the pet from further abuse by claiming ownership of said pet. I understand that Ann Davis Transition Society staff may, with my consent, contact the SPCA to assist me in maintaining my pet's safety.

### ***Confidentiality***

I understand that pet companions sometimes suffer abuse at the hands of others. I agree to not reveal to anyone the location of my pet (whether at a safe house, in a foster home or in a shelter) as this may pose a safety risk to not only my pet, but also myself, my co-residents, the foster family, safe house or shelter staff. I understand that Ann Davis Transition Society staff shall maintain confidentiality with regards to the location of myself and my pet.

### ***Pet Information***

- ☐yes ☐no My pet's required vaccinations are up to date,  
☐yes ☐no My pet is on a monthly flea and tick preventative medication,  
☐yes ☐no My pet has been in good health for the last 30 days  
☐yes ☐no My pet is not aggressive or toy protective,  
☐yes ☐no My pet has been spayed or neutered.

Owner/Guardian's Initials



### ***Pet Health***

1. I represent that my pet has not had any contagious illnesses of any kind for 30 days prior to check-in. I am aware and understand that Ann Davis Transition Society employees do not have backgrounds in animal health, therefore employees cannot treat or diagnose illnesses in the pets that are staying at an Ann Davis Transition Society safe house.
2. I agree, that should an employee of Ann Davis Transition Society recommend my pet see a veterinarian I will ensure my pet has been examined by a veterinarian to maintain my pet's residence in an Ann Davis Transition Society safe house.
3. I agree to assume the responsibility for the administration of medications to my pet during our stay. I will ensure all pet medications are stored in a locked location.

### ***Duty to Disclose***

I represent that I have disclosed and shall continue to disclose, any previous or new medical conditions or any other conditions, including, but not limited to, personality concerns or behaviours that may affect, limit, or prevent my pet's ability to reside safely at an Ann Davis Transition Society safe house. I understand that Ann Davis Transition Society is relying on, and will rely on those representations to provide a safe environment for both humans and pet companions.

### ***Pet Care***

I understand that during my pet's stay at an Ann Davis Transition Society safe house my pet's food, bedding, kennel and supplies may be provided, however extraordinary expenses are not within the ability of the Ann Davis Transition Society to pay and will be my responsibility.

I understand I am responsible for my pet's wellbeing and I will provide my pet with all the care it requires while we are residing at a safe house; this includes feeding, bathing, cleaning up after my pet, taking it out for walks and exercise, ensuring my pet's living area is clean and odour free.

### ***Outdoor Pet Exercise Enclosure***

I understand that I may take advantage of the secure outdoor exercise area for my pet. I agree to take full responsibility for ensuring my pet's comfort and safety while using the enclosure, and I will clean up any excrement left by my pet. If I am off the premises, I agree to have another person check on my pet until my return. If my pet should get out of the enclosure and become lost or injured I shall release all liability of the Ann Davis Transition Society and accept the responsibility myself. **Note: safe house staff are not permitted to care for pets in the owner's absence.**

### ***Aggressive Dogs***

I certify that my dog is not aggressive and I understand that aggressive dogs are not permitted to reside at an Ann Davis Transition Society safe house. If my dog acts aggressively or exhibits unacceptable behavior, I understand I may be asked to board my pet elsewhere.

### ***Personal Property***

I agree that Ann Davis Transition Society shall not be responsible or liable for any lost, stolen, or damaged personal property belonging to my pet during our stay at a safe house.



### ***Safety***

For the safety of pets, their human companions, co-residents and employees of an Ann Davis Transition Society safe house, I agree to muzzle my dog and have it leashed when transporting it through common areas of the safe house. Should my dog be unable to wear a muzzle I agree to transport it in a kennel. Cats and other pets will be transported through common areas in a kennel or cage. (Muzzles will be provided by the safe house)

### ***Pet Behavior***

I agree to be solely financially responsible for any and all acts or behavior of my pet while residing in an Ann Davis Transition Society safe house, which may include payment of damages for the injury caused by my pet to other pet companions, co-residents, and/or an Ann Davis Transition Society employee. In addition, I agree that if my pet is injured by another pet, I hereby release Ann Davis Transition Society, its directors, officers, employees, and agents from all liability and financial responsibility for such injury. I further understand that if my pet bites a human or another pet, that Ann Davis Transition Society staff may contact the appropriate authorities.

### ***Abandonment Notice***

I fully understand and agree that if I have not picked up my pet within three (3) calendar days after I have departed from the safe house, or in the event I am over twelve (12) hours past the time I stated that I would return to the safe house, **AND** if I have not phoned the safe house staff to make arrangements for my pet to be cared for, I understand that my pet shall be deemed "abandoned" by me. I understand if I abandon my pet at a safe house, Ann Davis Transition Society shall assume ownership of my pet, and in its sole discretion, will foster, re-home my pet, or will relinquish my pet to the SPCA or a shelter of its choice.

**I FULLY UNDERSTAND AND AGREE THAT IF I ABANDON MY PET AT AN ANN DAVIS TRANSITION SOCIETY SAFE HOUSE I MAY BE UNABLE TO RETRIEVE MY PET AND I WILL HAVE NO RECOURSE AGAINST ANN DAVIS TRANSITION SOCIETY, ITS DIRECTORS, OFFICERS, EMPLOYEES OR AGENTS.**

Owner/Guardian's Initials

### ***WAIVER OF RELEASE AND INDEMNIFICATION***

I release, waive, discharge, indemnify and agree to hold Ann Davis Transition Society, its directors, officers, employees and agents harmless for any and all manner of damages, injury, claims, loss, liabilities, costs or expenses, attorney's fees, causes of action or suit, whatsoever in law or equity, arising out of or related to the pet friendly services provided by Ann Davis Transition Society, its directors, officers, employees or agents including without limitation: any inaccuracy in any statement made by myself or information provided by me to Ann Davis Transition Society, my pet, including but not limited to destruction of property, dog bites, injury, and transmission of disease, and any action by myself that is in breach of the terms of this agreement.



**AFFIRMATION**

I am affirming the terms of this agreement, and the truthfulness and accuracy of all the statements I have made in this agreement. I have read and fully understand the terms of this agreement and understand that I may give up substantial rights to my pet by signing it.

I have signed this agreement freely and voluntarily without any inducement, assurance or guarantee and intend it to be a complete and unconditional release of all liability of Ann Davis Transition Society's directors, officers, employees and agents to the greatest extent permitted by law. I further agree that if any portion of this agreement is held to be invalid or unenforceable, the remainder of this agreement shall remain in full force and effect.

Any violation of the aforementioned terms will be considered a breach of contract.  
The agreement is listed above in its entirety.

By signing this indenture with my signature below I acknowledge my full understanding and agreement to the contents of the Ann Davis Transition Society Pet Agreement.

Dated this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Staff Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Owner/Guardian's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Staff Name (print) ID#

\_\_\_\_\_  
Owner/Guardian's Name (print)



ann davis transition society

## Pet Phone Assessment Form

Name of staff doing Assessment: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This form is intended for staff to assess and determine the suitability of potential pets coming to reside at an Ann Davis Transition Society safe house.

### Allowable Pets

Ann Davis Transition Society allows pets that may be a bird, a rabbit, a ferret, or other caged pets such as rodents (gerbil, hamster etc.). A small bowl or tank of fish no bigger than 5 litres, a cat, or a dog weighing 20kg or less (except a vicious or dangerous dog). Any pets other than these require prior written approval from the Director of Housing.

### Prohibited Pets

Ann Davis Transition Society does not allow livestock or animals intended for human consumption, reptiles or exotic animals like alligators, turtles, lizards, spiders, wild animals such as squirrels monkeys, or raccoons, or any animal requiring a heat lamp. Ann Davis Transition Society does not allow pets that are illegal. Hybrids between domesticated and wild animals are not permitted (i.e. Bengal cats, dogs that are part wolves, etc.)

### Assessment Questions

Name of person with pet: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you the primary owner of the Pet(s) you want to bring in? \_\_\_\_\_

How many and what types of pets do you have?

☐ Dog(s) \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Cat(s) \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

More information about pet(s) (dog breed, size, age, separation anxiety, loudness, health problems, medication including flea medication, special diet, indoor or outdoor, etc.):

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If the pet is a Guide or Service Animal or a therapy pet, does it have proper documentation?

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ann davis transition society

Do you fear for the safety of your pet? \_\_\_\_\_

Has your pet been a victim of abuse or is in danger of being abused?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Has anyone threatened to harm your pet? \_\_\_\_\_

If your pet(s) can't stay here, do you have alternative arrangements or place where they could stay? \_\_\_\_\_

Does your pet have ticks, fleas or mites? \_\_\_\_\_

If so, how are you treating it? \_\_\_\_\_

Will your pet be able to cope with a communal living situation? \_\_\_\_\_

Has your pet ever displayed aggression toward:

Children? ☐ Yes ☐ No    Adults? ☐ Yes ☐ No    Other Animals? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please explain:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Is there anything else we should be aware of?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### Pet Rules:

- All of the pets' belongings must be washed upon arrival.
- 1. All dogs and cats are will be required to receive Veterinarian approved prophylaxis treatment for fleas upon arrival. (flea collars and non-veterinary products are not sufficient)
- Clients are fully responsible for the health, care and wellbeing of their pets.
- Pets cannot be left unsupervised and are not permitted to roam freely in common areas of the house.
- Pet minding by staff is not permitted.
- Pets must be in a cage, kennel or on a leash when being transported to the designated pet area outdoors or off premises.
- All pets (including cats) must be leashed when in outdoor areas on the property.
- Dogs must have a muzzle on during transportation through common areas.
- Pets not suitable for communal living may be asked to be boarded elsewhere.
- All pet medication is the owner's responsibility.
- Pet owners must keep the pet's living area clean and odour free.

Pet Accepted? ☐ Yes ☐ No    If no, why? \_\_\_\_\_



### In-House Pet Care Form

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Care Giving Arrangement: \_\_\_\_\_

Departure Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Expected Return Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Person responsible for the care of the pet(s): \_\_\_\_\_

*Pet(s) to be cared for:*

Name	Species	Special Instructions

Emergency Contact Information:

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

It is imperative that both the pet owner and the caregiver understand that Interval House of Ottawa-Maison Interval d'Ottawa (IHO) is not responsible for the care of the pet(s). If the pet owner does not return at the expected time, the caregiver will be offered options should she not be able to continue care (e.g., arrangement of an alternate caregiver if possible). Contact with IHO is vital to avoid consequential warnings.

Please call if you are going to be late!

*As a caregiver, you are releasing IHO from responsibility for incidents beyond our scope of responsibility. Caring for another's pet(s) may involve a risk of injury and IHO accepts no responsibility for such related risks. I have read and fully understand the contents of this caregiving arrangement and I sign it freely and voluntarily.*

Pet owner signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Caregiver signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

### Between

Interval House of Ottawa-Maison Interval d'Ottawa (IHO)  
PO Box 40089, 2515 Bank Street, Ottawa ON, K1V 0W8

### and

VCA Canada Alta Vista Animal Hospital (AVAH)  
2616 Bank Street, Ottawa ON, K1T 1M9

### Roles and Responsibilities

#### VCA Canada Alta Vista Animal Hospital agrees to provide:

##### Pro-bono Services:

- Wellness exams within 24 hours of intake at IHO
- Vaccinations within 24 hours of intake at IHO
- Initial treatment for parasites and minor, uncomplicated conditions (e.g. ear/eye infection, minor wound, stress-induced colitis, medical grooming)
- Compassionate euthanasia and group cremation
- Male cat neuters **with associated basic lab fees**
- Five spay/neuter procedures **with associated basic lab fees** for dogs or female cats per calendar year

##### Costed Services:

- Pet owners are responsible for all costs associated with the care of their animals
- **Additional lab fees run on an as-needed basis at cost**
- Pre-anaesthetic bloodwork run on an as-needed basis at cost
- All other medical, surgical care, hospitalization, treatment would be discounted by 35%
- Food and retail items for IHO and clients at cost
- In cases of emergency when an owner cannot afford required services, all costed services will be pre-approved by the Executive Director of IHO or her designate before being charged to IHO
  - Invoicing will be made to the attention of the Executive Director, IHO and sent via email to Office & Finance Administrator at [business@intervalhouseottawa.org](mailto:business@intervalhouseottawa.org)
- Fundraising for emergency veterinary care will be sought

##### Records:

- AVAH will return the completed Referral form for Veterinary Services with exported records attached
  - Interval House of Ottawa is the client. Patient is pet name and owner first name

- Contact information is 24/7 crisis line: 613-234-5181
- All records to be sent by email to [business@intervalhouseottawa.org](mailto:business@intervalhouseottawa.org)
- Share data and statistics on the project with Community Veterinary Outreach

Interval House of Ottawa agrees to:

- Call AVAH in advance to book an appointment and
- email referral form for each animal
- Arrange transportation of animal to AVAH and back to IHO
- Include a link on the IHO website to the AVAH website
- Provide periodic public acknowledgement of the contributions of AVAH to IHO clients

**Confidentiality**

All parties will treat as confidential any information about clients and the affairs of the agency to which they become privy, except where required by law to disclose this information. This obligation extends beyond the period of this MOU.

**Commencement**

This MOU will take effect upon signing by both parties.

**Revisions**

The MOU may be amended at any time only by written agreement signed by each of the parties.

**Misunderstanding**

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

**Termination**

This MOU may be terminated by either party by providing 4 weeks' written notice.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kia Rainbow, Executive Director  
Interval House of Ottawa-Maison Interval d'Ottawa

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Julie Dywer, Hospital Manager  
VCA Canada, Alta Vista Animal Hospital

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



### Pet Assessment

**\*\* All information is strictly confidential \*\***

Phone assessment by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Referred by: \_\_\_\_\_ Time of call: \_\_\_\_\_

Admitted: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Name of owner: \_\_\_\_\_

Pet(s) you're requesting to bring into shelter:

Name	Species	Breed	Age	Gender	Spay/Neuter*
					<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
					<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
					<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

**Check the Pets Board in the front office for space availability**

*At caller's discretion, there may be multiple dogs per dog unit as long as they are "related" and have an agreeable temperament*

#### Requirements to shelter a pet at IHO:

- ☐ Cats/dogs must be spayed/neutered
- ☐ Cats/dogs must receive health check & vaccinations as identified by vet during health check (pro bono)  
*Small mammals only see vet if injured/ill*
- Must sign waiver upon arrival:
  - ☐ IHO staff, volunteers, students, residents not liable for harm to pet
  - ☐ Resident responsible for cost of medical/surgical services beyond initial health check/vaccinations;
  - ☐ Resident responsible for vet costs if pet injures another person/pet
  - ☐ Will sign expectations of pet care agreement
- ☐ Caller agrees: Continue with assessment
- ☐ Does not agree: Refer to SafePet

*Last modified: September 2018*

**Temperament of pet(s)**

1. How long have you had the pet(s)? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How do they normally act:
  - a. Around people? \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Around other animals? \_\_\_\_\_

Assess whether the communal pet housing would be an appropriate fit for the pet's temperament

☐ Yes: Continue with assessment

☐ No: Refer to SafePet

3. Has your pet bitten any person or animal? ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - a. If yes, please describe the circumstances: \_\_\_\_\_

*Assure caller they can still come to IHO, but we need to take precautions around biting.*

4. Assess exposure to fleas. Do you suspect the pet has fleas? ☐ Yes ☐ No

*Assure caller they can still come to IHO, but flea treatment will need to be administered at health check.*

**Staff:** Describe communal pet housing: pets reside in separate pet housing area, access to pet, living rooms, outdoor exercise area, responsibility to care for pet

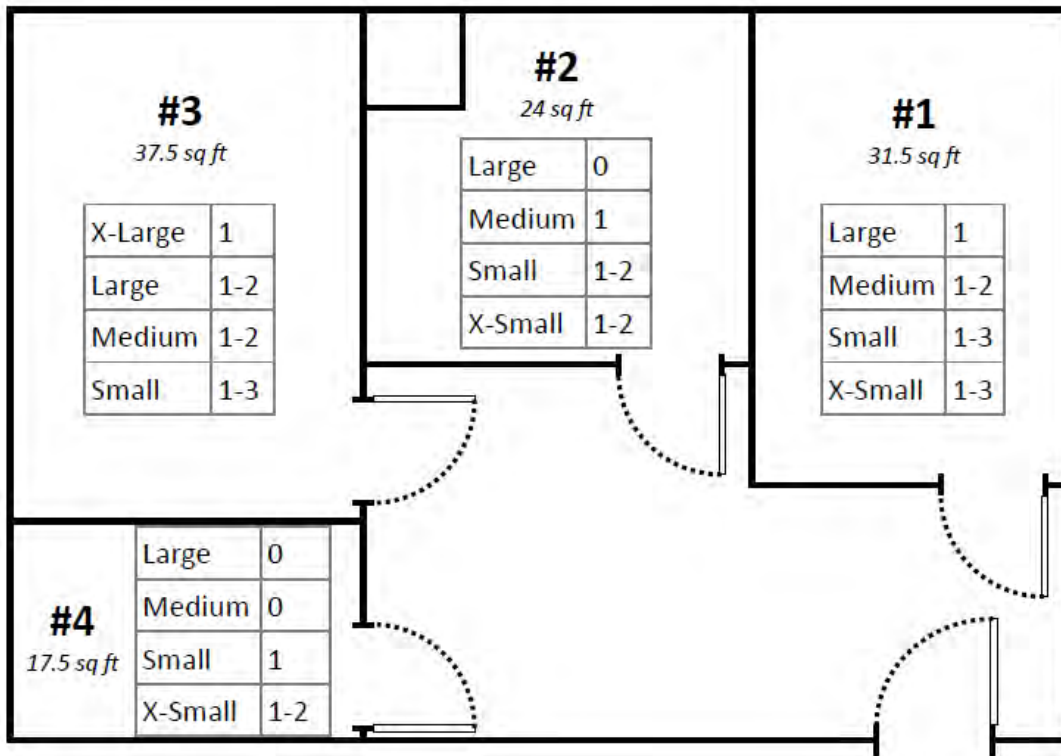
Where possible, items to bring to shelter:

- Record of vaccinations
- Proof of spay/neuter
- Food, treats, medication
- Cages for small animals
- Any toy/bedding that's important for pet's comfort
- Leashes, collars
- Cat's preferred litter

5. Inform caller that more information will be collected during 48 hour intake, and IHO will schedule appointment for health check and (if applicable) spay/neuter.

*Last modified: September 2018*

Dog housing units



Cat housing units (1 cat per unit)

1	2
3	4
5	6



### **Pet Housing Waiver**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree that under no circumstances shall I hold Interval House of Ottawa (IHO) and/or its staff, volunteers, students or residents liable for any harm to my pet incurred during my stay at IHO.

I acknowledge that I am responsible for the cost of medical or surgical veterinary services, beyond the initial health check. I am also responsible for the veterinary or health costs for any injury to another pet or person harmed by my pet(s).

I am aware that volunteers will be working in the pet housing area providing cleaning services and animal companionship.

If I am away from the shelter for 24 hours and have left/leave my pet(s) in shelter unattended without prior approval, I have abandoned my pet(s) and have no further rights to the pet(s). IHO will commence placing the pet(s) elsewhere.

I have the option to reschedule my pet's initial wellness check due to unforeseeable emergencies. However, if I choose not to attend the initial wellness check, my pet may no longer be eligible to reside at IHO.

I agree that I will take my pet(s) with me when I discharge from IHO.

If I breach any of the commitments listed above, I am aware that I may be asked to find alternate housing.

#### Initial Intake / Arrival at Shelter:

Resident: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Staff: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



### Referral for Veterinary Services (AVAH)

Call ahead to book appointment (select Emergency in phone tree): 613-731-6851

Also send completed form to [records.altavista@vca.com](mailto:records.altavista@vca.com)

#### SECTION A: OWNER INFORMATION

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of IHO staff referring: \_\_\_\_\_

First name of pet owner: \_\_\_\_\_ Best way to reach owner: \_\_\_\_\_  
(e.g. cell, email, crisis line)

Date and time of appointment: \_\_\_\_\_  
*owner must accompany pet to appointment*

#### SECTION B: PET INFORMATION

Name	Species	Breed	Age	Gender	Spayed / Neutered
					<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Presenting to AVAH for: ☐ Wellness check ☐ Vaccines ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Pet's last visit to vet: \_\_\_\_\_

Received flea/tick/heartworm treatment? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Pet's medications: \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ N/A

Pre-existing medical issue(s): \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ N/A

Do you have the following items with you:

Record of vaccinations? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Medical records? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Medications? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Owner provided verbal consent for AVAH to contact previous vet for medical information on the pet?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Previous vet name/contact information: \_\_\_\_\_

Return form with medical record attached to  
Kia Rainbow, [business@intervalhouseottawa.org](mailto:business@intervalhouseottawa.org)



## **POSITION DESCRIPTION**

### **Pet Housing Volunteer**

Staff Resource Person: Front office staff  
Date approved: October 17, 2018

#### **POSITION SUMMARY**

The Pet Housing Volunteer assists Interval House of Ottawa (IHO) staff with the day-to-day demands and maintenance of the pet housing area and pets in shelter. This includes laundry, cleaning of pet housing area, support with caring for pets such as dog walking, feeding, companionship, etc.

Pet Housing volunteers will sign a Pet Housing Volunteer Acknowledgement Form before performing any tasks at IHO.

#### **RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Cleanliness of the pet housing area, including:
  - Cleaning of litter boxes
  - Cleaning of dog/cat housing units
  - Transitioning housing units for a new pet resident
  - Laundry
- Assisting with pet exercise and companionship, including:
  - Dog walking
  - Companionship for pets
- Assisting with the management of pet food supplies
  - Receiving, stocking and tracking inventory of supplies, food, etc.
- Assisting with feeding animals, as needed.
- Communication with front office staff.

#### **ELIGIBILITY & REQUIREMENTS**

- All people (male, female, non-binary)
- Age 16+, including high school students
- Experience and comfort with dogs, cats and small mammals ex. Hamsters & gerbils
- Police Record Check Level 3 – Vulnerable Sector Check (under age 18: parent/guardian consent form)
- Signed Commitment Agreement

#### **LOCATION**

- Interval House of Ottawa (confidential location)

#### **TIME REQUIRED**

- 1 shift per week; Approximately 2-3 hours
- 3 shift options available (dependent on availability and schedule of volunteer)
  - Morning, afternoon or evening

## Appendix D: Financials

Item	Unit Cost	After Tax Cost	Unit Measurement
<b>Ongoing Monthly Costs</b>			
Dry Dog Food	\$ 53.99	\$ 59.93	40 lbs
Dry Cat Food	\$ 31.99	\$ 35.51	17.8 lbs
Wet Cat Food	\$ 38.99	\$ 43.28	48 cans
Puppy Food	\$ 31.99	\$ 35.51	20 lbs
Cat Litter	\$ 34.00	\$ 37.74	42 lbs
Dog Waste Bags	\$ 3.97	\$ 4.41	60 bags
<b>One-Time Start Up Costs</b>			
Litter Box	\$ 24.98	\$ 27.73	1 each
Litter Box Scooper	\$ 0.97	\$ 1.08	1 each
ID Tags	\$ 11.97	\$ 13.29	1 each
Cat Carrier	\$ 49.97	\$ 55.47	1 each
Dog Crate	\$ 77.97	\$ 86.55	1 each
Dog Bed	\$ 19.97	\$ 22.17	1 each
Cat Bed	\$ 49.99	\$ 55.49	1 each
Scratching Post	\$ 14.97	\$ 16.62	1 each
Cat Grooming Products	\$ 9.94	\$ 11.03	1 each
Dog Grooming Products	\$ 22.91	\$ 25.43	1 each
Food and Water Dishes	\$ 5.37	\$ 5.96	1 each

Collars	\$ 8.97	\$ 9.96	1 each
Leashes	\$ 10.95	\$ 12.15	1 each
Chew Toy	\$ 9.97	\$ 11.07	1 each
Cat Toys	\$ 4.27	\$ 4.74	1 each

The dollar values provided were based on prices retrieved from Costco.ca, Walmart.ca, and Petland.ca, and were taxed at a combined tax rate of 11.00%.

## Appendix E: Report References

- <sup>1</sup> Phillips, A. (2020). Sheltering Animals & Families Together: SAF-T Program Start Up Manual (Manual).
- <sup>2</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020, October 09). Preventing Intimate Partner Violence | Violence Prevention | Injury Center | CDC. Retrieved August 24, 2021, from <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/fastfact.html>
- <sup>3</sup> Status of Women Canada. (2018, December 10). It's Time to Recognize. Retrieved August 24, 2021, from <https://cfc-swc.gc.ca/violence/knowledge-connaissance/fs-fi-1-en.html>
- <sup>4</sup> Rotenberg, C. (2019, July 04). Police-reported violent crimes against young women and girls in Canada's Provincial North and Territories, 2017. Retrieved August 18, 2021, from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2019001/article/00012-eng.htm>
- <sup>5</sup> Wuerch, M. A., Giesbrecht, C. J., Price, J. A., Knutson, T., & Wach, F. (2017). Examining the Relationship Between Intimate Partner Violence and Concern for Animal Care and Safekeeping. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 35(9-10), 1866-1887. doi:10.1177/0886260517700618
- <sup>6</sup> Wuerch, M. A., Giesbrecht, C. J., Jeffrey, N., Knutson, T., & Wach, F. (2018). Intimate Partner Violence and Concern for Animal Care and Safekeeping: Experiences of Service Providers in Canada. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 36(9-10). doi:10.1177/0886260518795503
- <sup>7</sup> Fitzgerald, A. J., Barrett, B. J., Stevenson, R., & Cheung, C. H. (2019). Animal Maltreatment in the Context of Intimate Partner Violence: A Manifestation of Power and Control? *Violence Against Women*, 25(15), 1806-1828. doi:10.1177/1077801218824993
- <sup>8</sup> Giesbrecht, C. J. (2021). Animal Safekeeping in Situations of Intimate Partner Violence: Experiences of Human Service and Animal Welfare Professionals. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. doi:10.1177/08862605211025037
- <sup>9</sup> DeGue, S., & DiLillo, D. (2009). Is Animal Cruelty a 'Red Flag' for Family Violence: Investigating Co-Occurring Violence Toward Children, Partners, and Pets. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 24(6), 1036-1056. doi: 10.1177/0886260508319362
- <sup>10</sup> Humane Society of the United States. (2004). Starting a Safe Havens for Animals Program (Manual). Washington, DC.
- <sup>11</sup> Degenhardt, B. (2005). Statistical Summary of Offenders Charged with Crimes against Companion Animals July 2001-July 2005. Report from the Chicago Police Department.