

A Fitting Solution

HSUS offers shelter evaluations for more compact budgets

The former Animal Services Consultation program (ASC) of The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) has changed its name and widened its array of services for shelters.

ASC was developed to provide animal shelters with standardized evaluations of their programs, recommend improvements, and guide them in implementing the recommendations. That's stayed the same. But the program has a new name: Shelter Services.

Other changes have taken place, too.

For many years, ASC offered one level of service—a top-to-bottom evaluation of all aspects of a shelter's operation. Since the program began in 1998, it has evaluated and helped nearly 60 shelters.

But due to the in-depth nature of these comprehensive evaluations, the team was only able to conduct four to six per year.

The in-depth approach helped many agencies dramatically improve their operations, according to Kim Intino, Shelter Services director, but it became clear that one size doesn't fit all. Staff determined that with a more flexible approach, many more shelters could be reached.

With this goal in mind, The HSUS launched the "Compact Evaluation" in July 2008. It's designed to make a shelter evaluation more practical and affordable for smaller agencies, focusing on five key areas of an agency's choice. Any shelter with 12 or fewer employees that handles fewer than 10,000 animals yearly is eligible to request a Compact Evaluation.

Shelter Services has also developed an even more tailored type of evaluation: the "Module" approach. It provides quick assistance to shelters on one particular issue—such as the adoption process, fundraising, or management/volunteer concerns—and offers an in-person visit to

observe the issues firsthand.

With the Module, a consultant—either an HSUS staff member or paid consultant—arranges a site visit with the shelter and conducts any necessary in-person meetings. The consultant provides guidance on challenges the shelter faces, reviews policies and other written materials, and provides the shelter with advice.

This new, “a la carte” option is a highly focused, cost-effective service that should enable the program to help more shelters than ever before. To learn more about Shelter Services and how it can assist you, go to animalsheltering.org/programs_and_services. **AS**