



THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES

[Pets for Life]

PETSMART
Charities



|| About Pets for Life

"If you judge people, then you have no time to love them."
—Mother Teresa

II About Pets for Life

By improving the relationship between a person and his or her pet, you help to improve the quality of life for both, thus increasing the chances of the pet staying in that home permanently.



 Amanda Arrington

The HSUS's Pets for Life (PFL) program is a groundbreaking [community outreach](#) initiative designed to extend animal welfare resources and information to pet owners who have never received services or have received services without long-lasting impact. PFL is centered in communities that have the least access to services and information—the truly under-served.

The PFL model encourages approaching people with respect and accepting that most people love their pets, regardless of socioeconomic status or variations in culture. Through this non-judgmental method, we help elevate the human-animal bond and foster healthy relationships between people and their pets. By improving the relationship between a person and his or her pet, we help to improve the quality of life for both by increasing the chances of the pet staying in that home permanently.

This approach is effective because it embraces the human component of the companion animal equation, meeting people where they are and establishing trust, creating a ripple effect in the community for long-term impact.

PFL is a two-pronged program. It provides direct services to [clients](#) in under-served communities, and trains/mentors other organizations to do the same.

PFL currently operates in four U.S. cities, using on-the-ground-engagement strategies to develop resources for the animal welfare field. Our goal is to extend the reach of animal welfare services, resources, and information to under-served communities. We are also shifting and broadening the animal welfare lens towards an understanding of, and response to, the severe disparities that exist in the provision of animal health care and basic wellness services for people and their pets in under-served communities. By identifying and targeting these disparities, it is possible to reach the most marginalized people and animals, offering a wealth of opportunities to help lessen companion animal suffering in the U.S.

The HSUS's PFL program includes a variety of components, including, but not limited to:

- **Community assessment:** Collecting data and research to help identify where the most under-served people and pets exist compared to the current inventory of pet wellness resources.
- **Neighborhood outreach:** In-person, outreach teams serve as a pet-care resource for community members, addressing concerns and providing advice and services as needed. This approach focuses on specific neighborhoods and includes the organic recruitment of advocates to be credible messengers from within the community. The foundation of the program is embedded community outreach and there is no replacement for the on-the-street, door-to-door approach.

- **Community outreach events:** Regularly scheduling community events to serve as a supplement to our ongoing neighborhood outreach, and an important way to establish our presence in the neighborhood. These provide free services to a large number of people in a short period of time and draws out a large number of unaltered pets.
- **Low- or no-cost spay/neuter:** Effectively delivering spay/neuter messages to pet owners who have not been previously engaged on this topic, providing financial assistance to remove cost barriers, and working with local providers to reach new audiences. Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, The HSUS's PFL program subsidizes the cost of spay/neuter and vaccinations in full, providing these critical, life-saving services for free.

- **Free dog-training classes:** Helping to improve people's relationships with their dogs, facilitating stronger communication and understanding between them, and drawing interest to the program.
- **Collaboration:** Identifying and engaging local partners from within the animal welfare and veterinary fields, as well as social work, youth advocacy, community, and faith-based services. Taking a holistic, collaborative approach to building humane communities.
- **Mentorships:** Training other organizations to effectively implement a PFL-type community outreach program; providing mentorship and guidance on approach, strategy, and operations.
- **Data collection:** Listening to our audience, collecting intake surveys, tracking data, evaluating our strategy, and delivering messages from under-served communities to the animal welfare and veterinary fields.

PFL builds humane communities using innovative strategies and fresh approaches designed to extend the reach of animal services, resources, and information to under-served areas. Addressing the critical need for proper engagement, as well as accessible, affordable pet care, our program helps animals by empowering the people who care for them.

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