



Sheltering Animals and Families Together (SAF-T) Webinar Questions & Answers

Start-Up & Operations

1. How do shelters raise money for a program of this nature?
 - a. There are a variety of ways to raise money so just be creative and think of how the animal people in your community would want to support your program. Here are just a few ideas:
 - i. Partner with your animal shelter or animal rescue group for a dog walk or other event. The animal shelter is interested in not having pets of domestic violence brought in to their shelter, so they may be willing to help your program.
 - ii. Reach out to local community groups and students groups and ask them to sponsor your program.
 - iii. Put donation canisters around your community.
 - iv. Ask your local pet store to put out a container for people to donate pet-related items.
2. Are there grants available to start a SAF-T Program?
 - a. Right now there are no known grants available. But if you check with community foundations, you may be able to find a grant.
 - b. For start-up costs, always ask contractors and vendors if they will donate the supplies and/or labor, or at least only charge you the cost of the materials. And ask family, friends and community groups if they will help with the physical set up of your pet sheltering program. Doing these steps may significantly reduce your start-up costs.
 - c. Donations from local citizens have supported current programs, so be sure to reach out and let your community know that you are (or want to) house families with pets.
3. Are you aware of these programs being established in extremely rural areas or in areas where access to animal shelters or vets is limited and/or required extensive travel?
 - a. I am not aware of any current shelters housing pets that do not have access to animal shelters or veterinary groups. Since those are two necessary components to SAF-T, you could consider putting together a transportation system (either with staff or volunteers) who can transport the animals back and forth. Depending on the distance to the veterinarian, you could ask for the veterinarian to simply make a weekly visit to the shelter and check all of the animals in your care at that time, rather than driving out with each pet that arrives. Check www.petfinder.com for a listing of shelters and animal rescue groups in and around your area.

4. Do you have a sense of whether or not a program like this can be set-up on rented shelter property or do most SAF-T Programs own their property?
 - a. You would need to check with the landlord to make sure that pets are allowed on the property. If they are, inform the landlord of your plans and the importance of housing pets with their family. It would be a good idea to have the landlord add provisions for the SAF-T program into your written lease so that there is no confusion as to the terms. If the current lease does not permit pets and the landlord is unwilling to change that provision, then consider the Safe Havens (off-site) housing option for pets.
5. Have there been any issues with SAF-T Programs obtaining insurance with consideration given to housing “bully-bred” pets, such as pit bulls?
 - a. I have not been informed of any shelters being denied coverage for bully breed dogs. However, knowing that some communities and state legislatures are considering policies that would prohibit insurance coverage for anyone housing a bully breed or other dog that is believed to be dangerous, this would be important to discuss with your insurance carrier. It is important to emphasize and enforce that only the family and designated shelter staff interact with the dog. This reduces incidents of dog bites, especially if the dog is stressed. And assure the insurance company that if a pet arrives that is too fearful or aggressive, you have an animal shelter or rescue group as your partner that is prepared to help with the pet.
6. Have there been any concerns from the Health Department or social services related to serving food in residential (institutional) type facilities where animals are also housed?
 - a. I have not been made aware of any shelter having the health department criticize the housing of pets. Again, by following the policy that pets must only have contact with their family or designated shelter staff, thus prohibiting them from free-roaming in the house, the animals should never be in an area where food is prepared.

Screening

1. Are all animals accepted into the program? If not, what resources are provided to the survivor and the pet?
 - a. Each shelter will determine what animals are accepted into SAF-T. Some shelters wish to limit their program to cats and dogs, whereas others are set up to handle reptiles, pocket pets, birds, and livestock. Most families will have cats and dogs. Having your animal shelter partner and veterinarian is helpful in case if a family has a pet that you cannot house. You can also reach out to the animal rescue community (www.petfinder.org) to see if any other organizations in your community or within driving distance will be able to help. If a client has a horse and if you can locate a horse farm or rescue organization within a drivable

distance, this would be worth advertising and reaching those potential clients who may be hesitant to call you.

2. What is the back-up plan in case a pet is bought into the shelter, but it doesn't work out for some reason?
 - a. The SAF-T requires that you partner with an animal shelter or animal rescue organization, as well as with a veterinarian. These animal protection professionals will be in the best position to help if you are unable to house a pet on-site.
3. You made a reference to an online manual to set-up a foster care system for pets and animals; can you provide more information about that?
 - a. The Safe Haven's Manual, written by Dr. Frank Ascione in 1999, can be found at http://www.humananimalconnection.org/PDF/ascione_safe_havens.pdf.
4. You also referenced a program called Ana's Animal Care; what is that and how does it relate to the SAF-T Program?
 - a. AniCare is a psychological treatment protocol for adults and children who are abusive to animals. You can read more about AniCare at <http://www.animalsandsociety.org>. Animals & Society Institute can also let you know if any practitioners in your community or state are trained in AniCare.

Animal Safety

1. How are concerns addressed when survivors may have an extended shelter stay, but their pet is being housed in an animal shelter that can no longer keep them onsite?
 - a. This is a valid concern since many shelters are already overcrowded on a daily basis and may set a limit for how long a pet can stay with them. First, having multiple animal shelter or animal rescue partners is one method of insuring safe housing for the pet. Second, asking your veterinarian if they can board the pet would be an option. Third, create your own in-house foster care program for pets (either through the volunteer services of your staff or outside volunteers).
2. With regard to the outdoor kennels/buildings, are they heated and cooled, or is the climate controlled in any way?
 - a. All outdoor kennels should be climate-controlled to address heat and cold. Failing to provide proper shelter that addresses extreme temperatures and weather could violate state animal abuse laws. So it is important to consider heating/cooling systems when establishing your outdoor kennel. Contact a local HVAC contractor and ask them the best and least expensive option for heating/cooling the outdoor kennel. Some shelters have split a line from their shelter to the outdoor kennel, while others have installed a separate system. Again, ask the contract if they will donate the supplies and/or time, or provide the services at cost. When they understand the live-saving work you are doing, they may be happy be involved in helping your efforts.

3. How are pets kept safe when housed outdoors?
 - a. It is important to padlock the fencing and/or doors to the outdoor kennels so that if an intruder enters your property, they are unable to obtain any of the animals. Some shelters have considered a video surveillance system. Again, if you contact a local video surveillance company, ask them if they will donate the video equipment and/or provide low-cost monthly maintenance fees. Since each shelter setup is different, this is an important aspect to keep the family pets safe.

4. Is there any routine surveillance of these outdoor areas? (Drew Alexander had some additional information about this regarding the security system used at his cruelty barn where they house cruelty case livestock; his contact is dalexander@gbhs.org)
 - a. See answer above. Some shelters have considered a video surveillance system but have not advised whether they went forward. If you can obtain a set up that works with your budget, it is worth the investment.

5. Have there been any partnerships between SAF-T Programs and other community agencies to prosecute for animal cruelty?
 - a. SAF-T primarily works with family violence shelters as its founding mission is to keep families and pets safe. However, it is important to hold offenders accountable if they harm a family pet. Ignoring animal abuse or brushing it aside for a variety of reasons does a disservice to the community because it allows an offender the opportunity to harm another animal and potentially another family.