

Berkshire Humane Society Strategic Action Plan 2023 - 2028



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Introduction

A strong strategic plan helps an organization plan for the future, respond to opportunities and deepen a commitment to a core mission. Here at Berkshire Humane Society, we've successfully expanded our reach to help animals in the Berkshires and beyond.

As we look forward, we will build on our accomplishments and face changes presented by new realities- challenges that will stretch our mission and services in new and exciting ways. These challenges seemed daunting a decade ago but, today, thanks to the strong commitment of our community, staff, volunteers and supporters; we are poised to expand the compassionate care, treatment and placement of companion animals and improve the welfare of all animals through education and outreach.

This Strategic Action Plan is the result of a six-month process, with valuable input from the board, staff, volunteers, community partners, veterinarians and donors.



Strategic Action Plan – Process

Berkshire Humane Society's expectation for the Strategic Action Plan was to develop actionable steps towards clearly defined goals. This plan is a product of months of work by our Stakeholders Group, a committee comprised of senior leadership, members of the Board of Directors and key personnel. The Stakeholders Group was responsible for developing goals and collaboratively developing the action steps associated with those goals. We brought in consultants, The Killoe Group, to facilitate conversations and guide the Stakeholders Group in developing a plan that was actionable, attainable and would grow Berkshire Humane Society in a visionary direction as articulated by the group. To ensure a collaborative and holistic approach, this process also considered surveys of the board and employees, conversations with volunteers and a focus group of community stakeholders including veterinarians and representatives of partner agencies. We sought input and feedback from various groups along the way to ensure that the vision for the next five years for Berkshire Humane Society meets community needs.



Strategic Pillars

The Stakeholders Group focused on three key areas or pillars which include **Medical**, **Pet Retention** and **Foster Care**. These were seen as the most significant areas of community need, and areas where Berkshire Humane Society can serve the community. Adoption will always be a part of our mission, but our number one goal is to do everything possible for animals to remain safely in their homes. As part of this plan, we'll provide families with the knowledge, resources, and services to ensure a long and happy life for their pets and appropriate transitional care if they must surrender an animal.

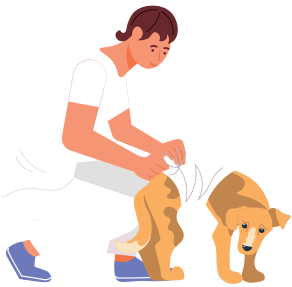


Pillar 1: **Medical**

Our clients, adoptive families and community leaders' primary concern with pet retention was affordable medical care. Nationwide there is a shortage of veterinarians as the field undergoes significant shifts in the way work is done. Locally, there is a greater need for access to veterinary health care, both on a regular and urgent basis. To help the animals live full and happy lives in their homes, Berkshire Humane Society will focus on adding low-cost veterinary care in our community through a medical program staffed and maintained by us.

Providing veterinary services, low-cost medical care and an urgent care program are needs identified by the community. A cornerstone of this pillar is the incorporation of the Allen Heights Veterinary Hospital in Pittsfield as a base of the medical program's operations. Our goals are specific and measurable, helping Berkshire Humane Society build a thriving veterinary practice that offers low-income families quality care at an affordable price. Specific goals of this plan are:

Medical Program Goals



Expand low-cost spay and neuter services to pet owners in need

Grow impact 5% annually – over 25% growth by 5 years.



Expand low-cost basic veterinary services to pet owners in need

Services include wellness exams with vaccines, microchipping, parasite testing, snap testing, flea and tick control, and expanded vaccines.



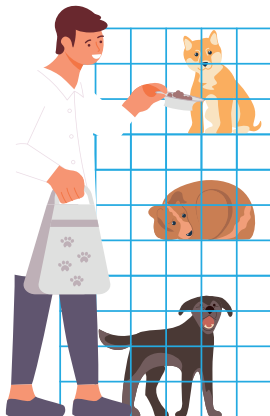
Establish a veterinary urgent care program by 2028

Provide non-emergency treatment for common issues and ailments.

Pillar 2: Retention

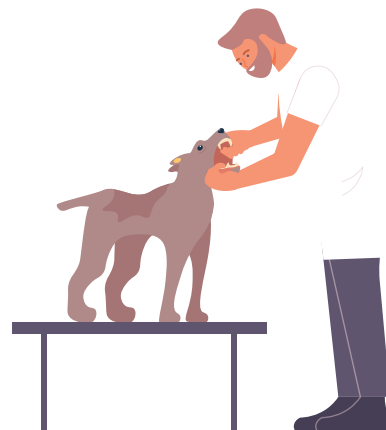
Recently the field of animal welfare has focused on examining root causes for pet surrender and rehoming situations. At Berkshire Humane Society, we've carefully watched these matters in our community. A key component of this strategic action plan is to make progress in the area of retention. We're dedicated to expanding programs and services that keep pets in their homes. Sometimes that is as simple as the SafePet program, providing temporary care for a pet when an owner has a physical or mental health challenge. Other times it can be behavioral education training, to ensure a family has the tools to help a pet adjust to a new environment instead of returning the animal to the shelter. When we address challenges that can lead to a surrender and provide help when needed, we have a community of better-educated families, happier pets and healthier outcomes.

Pet Retention Goals



Increase SafePet program capacity by 10%

Expand connection with foster homes to provide temporary housing for animals whose owners seek temporary assistance.



Expand family dog school

Increase the number of courses offered, increase the diversity of course offerings and offer more course locations.

Pillar 3: **Foster**

The future of animal welfare is bound to be less dependent on long-term shelter stays, and more tailored to temporary (sometimes longer-term) stays in a home environment. Studies show that when surrendered animals spend time with the right families, they are more adoptable and better adjusted in new environments. This brings certain challenges to the foster program, such as, recruiting committed families and training them to provide the best care possible in the right environment, especially for difficult situations. To continue our core mission of offering a safe place for animals between homes, we'll expand our foster program, helping animals socialize and find caring temporary homes with loving, knowledgeable, trained volunteer families.

Foster Program Goal:

Expand foster program

Create a specialized foster program for "hard-to-adopt" animals and create a specialized foster program for animals recovering from medical events.



Conclusion

With this plan, Berkshire Humane Society is positioned to anticipate and meet the current and future needs of the community. We'll expand services and our geographic footprint while continuing to maintain our best-in-class programs including adoption and humane education. We'll continue to be at the forefront of animal welfare organizations throughout the country. Most important, animals in our corner of Western Massachusetts and the families who love them will receive quality care and services – helping us achieve our mission of ensuring the compassionate care, treatment and placement of companion animals while promoting and improving the welfare of all animals through education and outreach.



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