



## Advocacy

In this section of the toolkit, you can find information and resources on:

- Legal representation
- Sample news releases
- Letters to the Editor
- One-pagers
- Legislation/public advocacy
- HSUS Pets Are Welcome (PAW) toolkit
- Social media graphics

To keep pets in their homes, we must keep people in their homes. In addition to implementing programmatic support that provides direct benefits to people and their pets who are facing eviction during the COVID-19 economic crisis (and beyond), a vital step is for animal shelters and other animal welfare organizations to lend their voices to existing affordable housing advocacy efforts. Advocating at the legal and/or policy level is critical to creating broad, long-lasting changes in affordable housing policies and practices that will be more protective of people and their pets.

### Legal Representation

Disclaimer: We understand that your organization may have limitations on what tasks can be assigned to volunteers. Please feel free to adapt the following recommendations to best fit the needs of your organization.

Action Steps	Tasks for Staff and High Level Volunteers	Tasks for Any Volunteers
<b>Identify Legal Representation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Consider creating a partnership with local bar associations to implement a legal-support resource bank for pet owners facing eviction.</li><li>➤ Check out <b>The American Bar Association</b> <a href="https://www.americanbar.org/groups/legal_services/flh-home/">https://www.americanbar.org/groups/legal_services/flh-home/</a> to identify free legal aid in your area.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Assist in creating partnerships.</li></ul>



<b>Fundraise to help create supportive legal fund</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Work with your fundraising team to identify ways to engage donors in this unique way of shelter diversion programming.</li><li>➤ Manage donor supported legal fund.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Ask volunteers to advertise these fundraising campaigns and help build a donor list in the event a family with a companion animal is facing eviction and facing fees such as retaining counsel or paying court costs.</li></ul>
<b>Distribute legal support info flyers to community members</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Check out the example <b>flyer used by BARCS</b> and their partnership with Maryland Legal Aid in your downloads.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Assist staff in flyer production in both English and Spanish.</li></ul>
<b>Utilize your organizations' existing resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Find out who in your team of volunteers is in the legal field and may be part of legal aid societies to see if they can provide additional insight or resources.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Provide pro-bono legal resources and/or use networking connections to find solutions.</li></ul>
<b>Seek collaboration with external resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Connect with the <b>HASS Legal team working group</b> <a href="https://hass-net.americanpetsalive.org/working-groups/legal">https://hass-net.americanpetsalive.org/working-groups/legal</a></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Connect with local agencies offering pro bono legal support, such as <b>Public Counsel</b> <a href="http://www.publiccounsel.org/about?id=0005">http://www.publiccounsel.org/about?id=0005</a></li><li>➤ Local law schools can generally offer support in certain areas. Connect with your local law school to find out if they can provide free legal resources and free legal advice for the needs of your community members. For example, <b>UCLA School of Law</b> has a list of pro bono resources in Southern California. <a href="https://libguides.law.ucla.edu/c.php?g=459742&amp;p=3148089">https://libguides.law.ucla.edu/c.php?g=459742&amp;p=3148089</a></li></ul>



**Sample News Release-** A news release from your organization can be used to alert local media about important work your organization is doing, share a success story from your organization, or raise awareness around emerging issues that your organization is facing.

Action Steps	Tasks for Staff and High Level Volunteers	Tasks for Any Volunteers
<b>Create and disseminate a News Release</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Feel free to use the <b>sample news release</b> from a shelter or rescue organization in your downloads, highlighting public support for affordable housing programs or how legislation could bring attention to how animal welfare and affordable housing issues intersect.</li><li>➤ Share published news release on organization's social media accounts.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Reshare published news release via personal social media, email, bulletins, and local community centers.</li></ul>

**Letters to the Editor (LTEs)-** Letters to the Editor are an excellent and relatively easy way to bring attention to important issues because LTEs are some of the most widely read parts of print and online newspapers.

Action Steps	Tasks for Staff and High Level Volunteers	Tasks for Any Volunteers
<b>Write and send a Letter to the Editor (LTEs)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Require volunteers to run LTE by staff member prior to submitting.</li><li>➤ Be sure to check LTE word limits for your local newspaper to ensure that your LTE has the highest chance of publication.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Identify and list which print and online newspapers would be the most appropriate for your organization's LTE.</li><li>➤ Check out the <b>sample LTE</b> located in your downloads, which volunteers can use as a template.</li><li>➤ Have your LTE reviewed by a staff member prior to submitting!</li></ul>



**One-Pager-** One-pagers can be used to visually inform volunteers, staff and animal advocates who are involved in animal issues about the current eviction crisis, but may be less comfortable discussing the relationship between affordable housing and companion animal welfare. One-pagers also contain key talking points that can be used to advocate for the topic.

Action Steps	Tasks for Staff and High Level Volunteers	Tasks for Any Volunteers
<b>Develop and share a One Pager</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Reach out to your city, county, state and federal government officials to support in the creation of your one-pager.</li><li>➤ Share the information from your one-pager on your social media pages or email it in your newsletters. Please feel free to use the <b>one-pager template located in your downloads</b> or create your own.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Reshare one-pager via personal social media, email, bulletins, local community centers.</li></ul>

**Legislation/Policy Advocacy** – Efforts to support affordable housing policies can be undertaken at the city, county, state or federal level, and the most effective opportunities to engage for your community will likely depend on where you live.

For example, do you live where eviction moratoriums and/or rental assistance are implemented at the city or county level, or where there is a local grassroots housing coalition? Or is your state-level government implementing these policies? Maybe your best option is to support the work of groups like the National Low-Income Housing Coalition or National Housing Law Project at the federal level.

***Remember, you do not need to reinvent the wheel or feel as though you are responsible for having the answers to making affordable housing policies more effective and just. The goal is to lend our voices, as animal welfare professionals and advocates, to the important work that other groups are already doing!***

Here are some steps to take to help you and your organization determine where to plug in and



how to support the work of the affordable housing organizations already on the ground in your community:

Action Steps	Tasks for Staff and High Level Volunteers	Tasks for Any Volunteers
<b>Find your state affordable housing partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Sign up for their emails, look at recent blog posts, action alerts, social media, etc. Conducting some basic research on what each organization is focused on will help you understand what types of legislation are being supported (or opposed) by affordable housing advocates in your community. If you have questions or you want to confirm specific information that you would like to put in an LTE or press release, reach out to these partners for help.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <b>National Low Income Housing Coalition state partners:</b> <a href="https://nlihc.org/state-partners">https://nlihc.org/state-partners</a></li><li>○ <b>Just Shelter resources at a state and community level:</b> <a href="https://justshelter.org/community-resources/">https://justshelter.org/community-resources/</a></li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Sign up for their emails, look at recent blog posts, action alerts, social media, etc. Conducting some basic research on what each organization is focused on will help you understand what types of legislation are being supported (or opposed) by affordable housing advocates in your community. If you have questions or you want to confirm specific information that you would like to put in an LTE or press release, reach out to these partners for help.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <b>National Low Income Housing Coalition state partners:</b> <a href="https://nlihc.org/state-partners">https://nlihc.org/state-partners</a></li><li>○ <b>Just Shelter resources at a state and community level:</b> <a href="https://justshelter.org/community-resources/">https://justshelter.org/community-resources/</a></li></ul></li></ul>
<b>Learn about successful eviction protections</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Check out the <b>map of state eviction moratorium protections.</b> <a href="https://www.rhls.org/evictionmoratoriums/">https://www.rhls.org/evictionmoratoriums/</a></li><li>➤ Ask your potential partners how you can help support their efforts.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Check out the <b>map of state eviction moratorium protections.</b> <a href="https://www.rhls.org/evictionmoratoriums/">https://www.rhls.org/evictionmoratoriums/</a></li><li>➤ Ask your state partners how you can help support their efforts.</li></ul>



### **Protect renters during the COVID-19 pandemic and associated economic crisis.**

- Connect with your local, state, and federal legislators to find out what affordable housing policies are being considered at each level of government and to ask them to support these policies.
    - **Find your Congressional District/House of Representatives member:**  
<https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative>
    - **Find your United States Senators:**  
<http://www.senate.gov/states/statesmap.htm>
    - **Find your state legislators** (note that “lower chamber” means State House of Representatives and “upper chamber” means State Senate):  
[https://openstates.org/find\\_your\\_legislator/](https://openstates.org/find_your_legislator/)
  - To find your local city council member or county commissioner you will need to visit the website of the local government. Typically, there is a page where you can search “Find my council member” or “Find my county commissioner” by entering in your address.
  - Once you learn who your various legislative representatives are, call and email each person asking them (1) what they’re doing to support affordable housing measures that will protect renters and (2) asking them to specifically support any efforts to
- Connect with your local, state, and federal legislators to find out what affordable housing policies are being considered at each level of government and to ask them to support policies.
    - **Find your Congressional District/House of Representatives member:**  
<https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative>
    - **Find your United States Senators:**  
<http://www.senate.gov/states/statesmap.htm>
    - **Find your state legislators** (note that “lower chamber” means State House of Representatives and “upper chamber” means State Senate):  
[https://openstates.org/find\\_your\\_legislator/](https://openstates.org/find_your_legislator/)
  - To find your local city council member or county commissioner you will need to visit the website of the local government. Typically, there is a page where you can search “Find my council member” or “Find my county commissioner” by entering in your address.
  - Once you learn who your various legislative representatives are, call and email each person asking them (1) what they’re doing to support affordable housing measures that will protect renters and (2) asking them to specifically support any efforts to





	<p>provide rental assistance and to extend eviction moratoriums in your community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ See the <b>sample dialogue in your downloads</b> that you can use as you formulate your own emails or prepare for a phone call.</li></ul>	<p>eviction moratoriums in your community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ See the <b>sample dialogue in your downloads</b> that you can use as you formulate your own emails or prepare for a phone call.</li></ul>
<b>Take Action</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ You can advocate through other groups' "Take Action" pages. National affordable housing groups also have easy-to-use action alert pages:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <b>National Low Income Housing Coalition:</b> <a href="https://nlihc.org/take-action">https://nlihc.org/take-action</a></li><li>○ <b>Opportunity Starts at Home:</b> <a href="https://www.opportunityhome.org/take-action/">https://www.opportunityhome.org/take-action/</a></li><li>○ <b>Just Shelter:</b> <a href="https://www.opportunityhome.org/take-action/">https://www.opportunityhome.org/take-action/</a></li></ul></li><li>➤ Many state groups will also have "take action" pages so sign up for their emails and action alerts after you have found your state affordable housing partner.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ You can advocate through other groups' "Take Action" pages. National affordable housing groups also have easy-to-use action alert pages:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <b>National Low Income Housing Coalition:</b> <a href="https://nlihc.org/take-action">https://nlihc.org/take-action</a></li><li>○ <b>Opportunity Starts at Home:</b> <a href="https://www.opportunityhome.org/take-action/">https://www.opportunityhome.org/take-action/</a></li><li>○ <b>Just Shelter:</b> <a href="https://www.opportunityhome.org/take-action/">https://www.opportunityhome.org/take-action/</a></li></ul></li><li>➤ Many state groups will also have "take action" pages so sign up for their emails and action alerts after you have found your state affordable housing partner.</li></ul>

**Pets are Welcome** – The HSUS **Pets are Welcome** toolkit (located in your downloads) guides advocates and animal shelters through how to work with property owners to build more pet-inclusive rental properties, a key solution in our efforts to help mitigate unnecessary pet surrenders due to widespread evictions.

**Social Media Graphics** - Help your community understand why the eviction crisis is important to animal welfare by using these Facebook graphics. Insert your organization's logo and create calls to action in your post to encourage your social media followers to foster, volunteer, or advocate for renter protections. For more information and tips on how to continue building your marketing and communication efforts, check out the **HSUS Pets For Life Sustainability Guide** (located in your downloads).



## Animal Welfare Supports Renter Protections

**When families are ripped apart, both humans and pets experience harmful effects on their physical and emotional wellbeing. Help us keep pets with their families.**



- Advocate
- Donate
- Foster
- Volunteer



## Can You Foster For Us?

**When families are ripped apart, both humans and pets experience detrimental effects on their physical and emotional wellbeing.**

**Help us keep pets with their families by becoming a foster volunteer.**

