

**Attended:**

Jen Booth, Freedom House  
Ann Brady, Mebane Vet Hospital  
Jeff Dillman, Legal Aid of NC  
Steven Frasca, Community Empowerment Fund (CEF)  
Sarah Furman, Chapel Hill Police Department  
Bob Marotto, Orange County Animal Services  
Bridget McEnaney, Compass Center  
Judy Miller, Orange County Animal Services Advisory Board  
Andi Morgan, Orange County Animal Services  
Corey Root, Orange County Partnership to End Homelessness  
Molly Rowe, Orange County DSS, Prevention Unit  
Cydnee Sims, Orange County Department on Aging  
Aviva Scully, Orange County Animal Services Advisory Board  
Pamela Vesilind, Coalition to Unchain Dogs  
Debra Vestal, Inter-Faith Council for Social Service (IFC)  
Rodney M. White, Southern States Corporation  
Sunny Westerman, UNC PAWS

**Minutes**

**Fair Housing & Animals**

Presentation from Jeffrey Dillman, Project Administrator, Fair Housing Project, Legal Aid of NC who discussed laws around service animals, assistance animals for both ADA & fair housing act laws

- Legal Aid of NC is a non-profit, with 20 offices in NC
- There are fair housing brochures available in English & Spanish on fair housing & fair housing for those with disabilities.

Housing providers (landlords, shelters) can have whatever rules they want re: pets. A service animal or assistance animal is not considered a pet, so those rules do not apply.

**Service animals**

- Governed by ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act)
- Disability substantially limits major life activities and not temporary (i.e.: broken leg)
- Protections apply to any building open to public (schools, stores, shelters)
- Service animal can be a dog or miniature horse
- Animal must be trained for specific tasks, not just a companion
- Providers can ask only two questions:
  - Is that animal required for a disability?

- What task/work has it been trained to do?
- The animal does not have to be registered or certified as a service animal
- Service animals do not usually apply to individuals with mental health issues

#### Assistance animals

- Governed by the Fair Housing Act
- Applied to places people live (dwellings) like group homes, shelters, apartments, homes, condos
- People can have an assistance animal or a service animal where they live
- Can be any type of animal (not just dog or miniature horse)
- Individual does need to have a disability
- Animal does not require specific training, could be providing comfort/calming
  - Applies to those with anxiety, autism, PTSD

#### Landlord communication

- Cannot ask if the person has disability
- Potential residents or their advocates can ask for reasonable accommodation for assistance animals
  - Landlord can then ask for proof that the person has disability if not visible
  - Landlord can ask for proof of why they need animal for specific disability
  - Proof usually comes from health care provider or social worker (someone with “initials after their name”) but can be from case manager, etc.

Potential issue: people who don't have existing documents detailing need for assistance animal available ahead of a housing crisis. Case managers and health care providers can be proactive in writing these reasonable accommodation letters for assistance animals.

#### Rules/regs for service and assistance animals

- Breed/size restrictions are not allowed for either assistance or service animals
- Animal has to be under control of individual, cannot be a demonstrated risk or challenge to other residents (i.e.: bites, barking)
- Individual with assistance/service animal is responsible for the vaccines, required for that animal in that county
- Individual also responsible for food, cleaning (i.e.: litter box)
- Individual cannot be required to pay extra for having animal, cleaning etc. - no pet deposits required as assistance/service animals are not considered pets
- If there is a resident with bad cat allergies and another individual with disability needing assistance cat, the shelter would be expected to make reasonable accommodation – likely cat would stay

More information – Legal Aid of NC Tenant Rights Clinic: <http://www.legalaidnc.org/get-help/Pages/self-help-clinics/tenant-rights-clinic.aspx>

### **Deliverable 1: Defining the Problem**

The Task Force reviewed and finalized verbiage of problem definition.

- Add statement to include those individuals, households, at risk for homelessness, for example short term, midterm (transitional), long term housing, those entering rehabilitation, jail.
- Include those with broad range of financial, situational, emotional problems that put them in position of homelessness.

### **Deliverable 2: Identified Resources**

Identify needs, pathways for different situations of people experiencing homelessness with a companion animal

Household living unsheltered

Household with a disability entering homeless shelter

Household without a disability entering homeless shelter

Household at risk of homelessness, needing affordable rentals

Household experiencing homelessness and fleeing domestic violence/sexual assault/stalking

Identify needs, pathways for different situations of people experiencing homelessness with a companion animal

- Household living unsheltered
- Household with a disability entering homeless shelter
- Household without a disability entering homeless shelter
- Household at risk of homelessness, needing affordable rentals
- Household experiencing homelessness and fleeing domestic violence/sexual assault/stalking



## Orange County Pets & Homelessness Task Force

### Meeting Notes

March 31, 2017, 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Orange County Animal Services, 1601 Eubanks Rd, Chapel Hill

Population	Barriers	Needs
<p>No housing (living in cars etc.)</p>	<p>Stigma – (person, pet) Find “pet friendly” services</p> <p>Criminal history of pet owner where housing wouldn’t accept those with criminal record.</p> <p>Lack of transportation</p> <p>Trust – how to ask/build communication so “invite” individuals to reveal situation at time of animal surrender</p> <p>Legal – protection for “foster” provider \$\$\$</p> <p>Language barrier</p> <p>Lack of education (resources, staff providing services – about fair housing/ADA, landlords)</p>	<p>Vet care &amp; how to access Temporary care for pet (O in jail) Food, water, shelter Supplies leashes/bowls Assurance/information that can get pet back</p> <p>Partners/service provider network organized with documents &amp; process</p> <p>“temporary/triage” placement such as in shelter to get pet flea/tick protected, vaccines, vet care so then can go into “foster network”.</p> <p>Also to protect pet owner who is trying to escape domestic violence situation.</p> <p>Need “3<sup>rd</sup>” party/navigator so that individual’s past history/situation doesn’t create barrier to housing (i.e.: drug history, criminal history)</p>
<p>Domestic violence</p>	<p>Extra attention needed to safety &amp; protection of client (confidentiality). May need to involve public safety/lawyer in future.</p> <p>Lack of safe place to come with pet since shelters are public if individual being pursued</p>	<p>Only 5 domestic violence shelters in the state (closest in Rocky Mount). Time limit (60 days) to stay in D.V shelter – then often leads to homelessness. Individuals won’t leave situation as they know pet can’t be protected.</p>
	<p>Affordable housing – could be looking at 8+months. Landlords who don’t accept vouchers</p>	
	<p>LONG Process to get housing</p>	

**Next Steps: Task Force Subcommittees**

- Pet Resource Bank
  - Purpose: Identify and collect info about different resources needed for people with companion animals who are experiencing/at risk of homelessness
  - Deliverables:
    - Google online database of resources with contact info and referral process (if needed), divided out by
      - Category (Supplies, Pet Care, Boarding, Pet-Friendly Housing Options, etc.)
      - Whether resource is open to the public or for service providers only
    - Printed short (1-2 page) resource list of publically available resources (in conjunction with Mapping Subcommittee below)
  - Meetings and timeframe:
    - 2-3 meetings mid-June – early September
    - Calls and emails to businesses and others between meetings
- Temporary/Foster Pet Care
  - Purpose: Explore options, and secure arrangements if possible, for temporary animal care for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness with attention to safety for all involved
  - Deliverables:
    - Orange County Animal Services – process, eligibility, and timeframe for implementation outlined
    - Foster Care groups – options explored, groups contacted to gauge interest, IF POSSIBLE: process, eligibility, and timeframe for implementation outlined
    - Pre-care – options explored, groups contacted to gauge interest, IF POSSIBLE: process, eligibility, and timeframe for implementation outlined
  - Meetings and timeframe:
    - 3-4 meetings mid-June – early September
    - Calls and emails to businesses and others between meetings
- Mapping
  - Purpose: Map paths of how people with companion animals transition from at-risk or literally homeless, including available resources for pets
  - Deliverables:
    - Public-facing, easy-to-understand infographic outlining what happens if someone is at risk of or currently experiencing homelessness and has a companion animal
      - Different paths for at-risk, newly homeless, and living unsheltered
      - Clear, concise info re: Where to go/Who to call if need help
      - Info re: where community members can donate/get involved
    - Publically available pet resource list for people experiencing homelessness (in conjunction with Pet Resource Bank Subcommittee above)
  - Meetings and timeframe:
    - 3-4 meetings mid-June – early September
    - Work on draft documents by email between meetings

## Orange County Pets & Homelessness Task Force Meeting Notes

March 31, 2017, 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Orange County Animal Services, 1601 Eubanks Rd, Chapel Hill

- Scope of Problem: Numbers
  - Purpose: Determine numbers of people with companion animals who are facing homelessness and processes Orange County agencies could put in place to determine numbers going forward
  - Deliverables:
    - Current numbers, people with companion animals
      - People at risk of homelessness
      - People newly homeless
      - People living unsheltered
      - Incorporating data from OC Animal Services, 2017 Point-in-Time count, FY 2016 System Performance Measures, OC Connect, Orange County Schools, CHCCS, Project Connect, the 100,000 Homes Task Force, general numbers of pet ownership
    - Recommendations of changes agencies/groups can make to gather data about pets and homelessness
      - OC Animal Services intake
      - HMIS (Homeless Management Information System)
      - Schools
      - Point-in-Time Count
      - Project Connect
  - Meetings and timeframe:
    - 1-2 meetings mid-July – mid August
    - Work between meetings by email
- Communication/education
- Rework brochure & recirculate

The Task Force also identified two tasks that the Task Force Planning Group will work on without creating an official Subcommittee:

(1) easy-to-understand instructions for service providers on how to write a reasonable accommodation letter for people with service and assistance animals

(2) a landlord roundtable to discuss what issues landlords have in renting to tenants at risk of homelessness with pets in addition to other landlord issues

**Next meeting – Friday September 29, 2017, 1-4:00 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted by Judy Miller