There is growing recognition of the importance of taking animal abuse seriously. Research on the relationship between animal abuse and other antisocial behavior has resulted in law enforcement recognizing animal abuse as a “crime against society.” Despite this important step forward, most animal abuse cases are charged as misdemeanors. There are few alternatives to hold perpetrators accountable and reduce the likelihood that they will repeat the behavior. Most people who have abused/neglected animals receive nothing more than a small fine. In order to address this gap, ASI has developed diversion/alternative sentencing programs for misdemeanor animal abuse offenders. These programs offer a viable option to address this gap and: (1) provide early intervention, (2) reduce cruelty to animals and humans, and (3) reduce recidivism.

ASI offers three levels of programs based on the severity of the offense:

- **Level I: CARE (Companion Animal Responsibility and Care)** is a four-hour program focused on educating participants on companion animals’ basic needs and minimum standards of care.

- **Level II: BARK (Behavior, Accountability, Responsibility, and Knowledge)** is a 16-week program focused on accountability and factors that motivated the abuse or neglect, including attitudes, beliefs, and other risk factors.

- **Level III: AniCare** is a one-on-one psychological intervention focused on animal abuse and co-occurring issues such as substance abuse, domestic violence, and child abuse.

### Diversion Program Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Short-term</th>
<th>Medium-term</th>
<th>Long-term</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Increase accountability</td>
<td>• Improve behavior: Promote proper care of animals</td>
<td>• Decrease recidivism</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Increase knowledge of animal care and well-being</td>
<td>• Promote healthy, positive relationships with animals</td>
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<td>• Change attitudes and beliefs that support animal abuse</td>
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• Improve self-management and interpersonal skills

How Does Diversion Work?

• Assignment to the program at judges’ discretion based on severity, background, and other relevant factors

• Participants who complete program may have misdemeanor charges dismissed and/or fines reduced

• Participants may be required to complete the program in lieu of jail time (or reduction of jail time)

Following an individual’s completion of any of the diversion programs, the court will receive a report, including information on attendance, level of participation, and a Transfer of Learning Assessment, which includes open-ended questions and pre-post quantitative measures to assess knowledge of and attitudes toward animals.