

Co-sheltering: Serving Homeless People and Companion Animals

The Animals & Society Institute (ASI) believes strongly in the power of collaboration and we are delighted to be a part of the **Co-sheltering Collaborative**, a new effort to identify and promote best practices for homeless people and their companion animals. ASI is working with My Dog is My Home, the nonprofit leading the collaborative, and four nonprofits working to end homelessness in the greater Los Angeles, CA, metro area. My Dog is My Home is a national organization dedicated to preserving the human-animal bond when people and their animals find themselves homeless. The collaborative will be sharing expertise, showcasing examples of innovative programs that address human and animal sheltering needs, and developing a road map for best practices in co-sheltering.

The lack of animal-friendly policies and practices in many shelters and social service agencies means people experiencing homelessness are often asked to choose between their companion animals and shelter. **Despite growing recognition of the importance of the human-animal bond, there is little documentation of co-sheltering strategies and even less information about the effectiveness of these efforts.** We will be working to assess pet-friendly homeless shelters' approaches to handling animals accompanied by people experiencing homelessness, documenting lessons learned and best practices. **Our goal is to inform development of animal-friendly policies and practices in homeless shelters nationwide, reducing the likelihood that animals will be relinquished simply because their caregivers are experiencing a period of homelessness.**

Check back for updates in mid-2019!