



HUMAN ANIMAL  
SUPPORT SERVICES

# *SOCIAL SERVICES ROUNDTABLE*

## THE HOW-TO PLANNING GUIDE

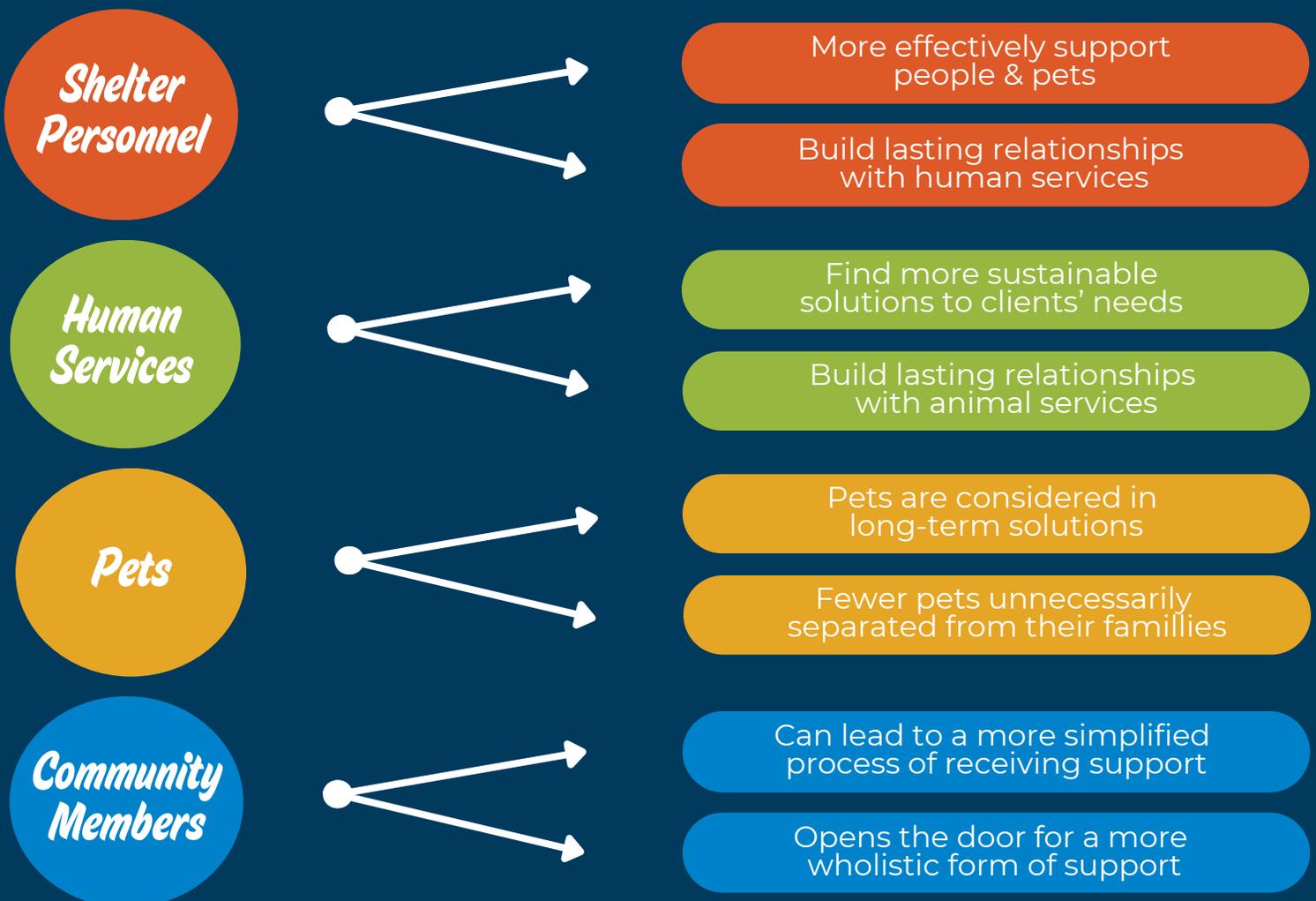


*A holistic approach to understanding what people and pets need in your community*

# WHAT IS THE GOAL OF A SOCIAL SERVICES ROUNDTABLE?

Gather animal services and human services together in one room to explore how best to support people and their pets. By embracing a holistic approach to community care, we'll create a more seamless and integrated experience for everyone!

## WHO BENEFITS FROM A SOCIAL SERVICES ROUNDTABLE?



# STEP ONE: DEVELOP A SOCIAL SERVICES “ECOSYSTEM MAP”



**Utilize this template** to create a list of local human social service providers in your area, organized by area of focus! Be sure to make a copy of the document before editing.



**Google your local human services agencies** by searching your location and area of need. Local municipality websites are also great places to identify what’s available. If needed, ask a volunteer to help with research!



**Consider using [findhelp.org](https://findhelp.org)** to search for human services in your area, specifically low cost programs that aim to support your local community members.



**Consider looking on the organization’s leadership page** for contact information. Once found, utilize the template above to track the organization name, contact information, and area of support (e.g., food pantry, financial assistance, housing support, etc.).

***This list, existing social service relationships, and any other animal welfare organizations you want present make up your invite list!***



## STEP TWO: RESERVE YOUR MEETING SPACE

Brainstorm **locations to host this meeting, day of the week, and time of day.** These factors may impact your attendance.

Consider places like **community action centers, public works departments, local libraries.** It is recommended to reach out to them prior to learn more about booking meeting space.

Pay mind to **meeting room size versus the amount of invitees on your invite list.** Be sure to count any staff from your organization that you plan to bring along.

**Think about what you plan to bring to the roundtable meeting.** Ask questions like:

- Are food and drink allowed in the meeting space?
- When will I have access to the space to set up?
- Do you have tech hook-up (HDMI, audio, etc)?
- Do guests need to know anything prior to arriving (security sign in, bathroom codes)?

*Once you have a meeting space reserved,  
you're ready to send invites!*



## STEP THREE: CRAFT AND SEND YOUR INVITES



Use the **contact information gathered in step one** to send invites.



We found emails to be effective, but keep an eye out on replies to ensure you aren't going to spam!



Be sure to **include any information needed for attendees**, such as date, time, location and any building codes/check in process (if applicable).



Consider **visiting invitees in person** to make them aware of the event. This is a great way to jumpstart connections and develop relationships prior to the roundtable!



*We found this to be successful in Columbia, SC!*



To maximize attendance, it is helpful to **send reminder emails** leading up to the event

*Read on for a sample email to help you get started!*



# STEP FOUR: CRAFT AND SEND YOUR INVITES

Sample  
Template!



Hi [Insert Name],

My name is [Insert Name] from [Insert Organization], and I'm reaching out because we know that pets are family—[98% of pet owners agree!](#) As we work to create social service solutions that support both people and their pets in our community, we would like to invite you to participate in a Social Services Roundtable!

We understand that your work focuses on people, not pets. However, many of the individuals and families you serve are pet owners, and their pets play a significant role in their well-being and decision-making. Your perspective can help us better understand how pet ownership intersects with human services and how we can work together to develop solutions that support both ends of the leash.

Please join us on [Date] at [Time], at [Location & Address] for a chance to connect on how to better serve our community, together! Please RSVP by replying to this email.

Warm wishes,  
[Insert name]  
[Organization name]

copy & paste the  
text into an email  
\*Be sure to copy the link!



# STEP FOUR: HOST YOUR ROUNDTABLE

## Hosting a Social Services Roundtable

Share real-life stories.

Consider making a slide deck to keep on topic.

Bring resource sheets of what your shelter offers for human services to utilize when supporting clients.

How can animal services support human services, and vice versa?

Allow organizations to introduce themselves and area of focus. Consider using ice-breakers.

Consider bringing refreshments.

Ask about common challenges.

Recap action items and think about next steps: partnerships, coalitions, events?

### Discuss Topics like:

- When clients seek services, do you ask about pet ownership?
- If you provide sheltering services, do you provide sheltering for both people and their pets?
- Do clients mention pet ownership as a barrier to accessing services or support?
- Does your organization/department have a relationship with an animal welfare organization?

Be sure to incorporate human-animal bond research. [You can find a comprehensive list here!](#)

*Once you've hosted your roundtable,  
it's time to put the discussion  
into action!*



## STEP FIVE: POST ROUNDTABLE FOLLOW-UP



**KEEP THE  
CONVERSATION  
GOING!**

Be sure to **send a follow-up email containing any relevant information:** slide deck, contact information (yours & other attendees), next steps, helpful links to research or resources.

**Develop actionable plans for any tasks** that resulted from the roundtable discussion. Document these intentions or brainstorming ideas to ensure progress in the planning process.

**Start thinking about your next meeting!** Is there anyone who couldn't make it? Be sure to add them to the next discussion! Think about the challenges that came up in the discussion. Are there any social services organizations that can add to the conversation?



Example: At Columbia Animal Services' roundtable, pet friendly housing came up frequently during their roundtable discussion. We suggested diving deeper into relationships with their local Housing Authority and inviting them to the next roundtable!



# KEY TAKEAWAYS: SOCIAL SERVICES ROUNDTABLES



**Learn about your community's offerings.** Learning more about what service providers exist in your community can benefit your organization and your community.



**Start planning.** Think about meeting space, invite list, resources, and research.



**Host your roundtable.** Even a small conversation can lead to big changes! What can be done now, and what can your community benefit from?



**Keep the conversation going!** Be sure to send a follow-up email with relevant information. Want to host the next roundtable? Re-invite members, and expand your guest list based on common challenges, and new connections made.

