



**HUMAN ANIMAL
SUPPORT SERVICES**



**PEDIGREE
FOUNDATION**



HOW TO *FORM A COMMUNITY COALITION* PLANNING GUIDE

*Creating a shared space to unite
around common challenges,
coordinate action,
and create collective impact
for people and pets*

GLOSSARY

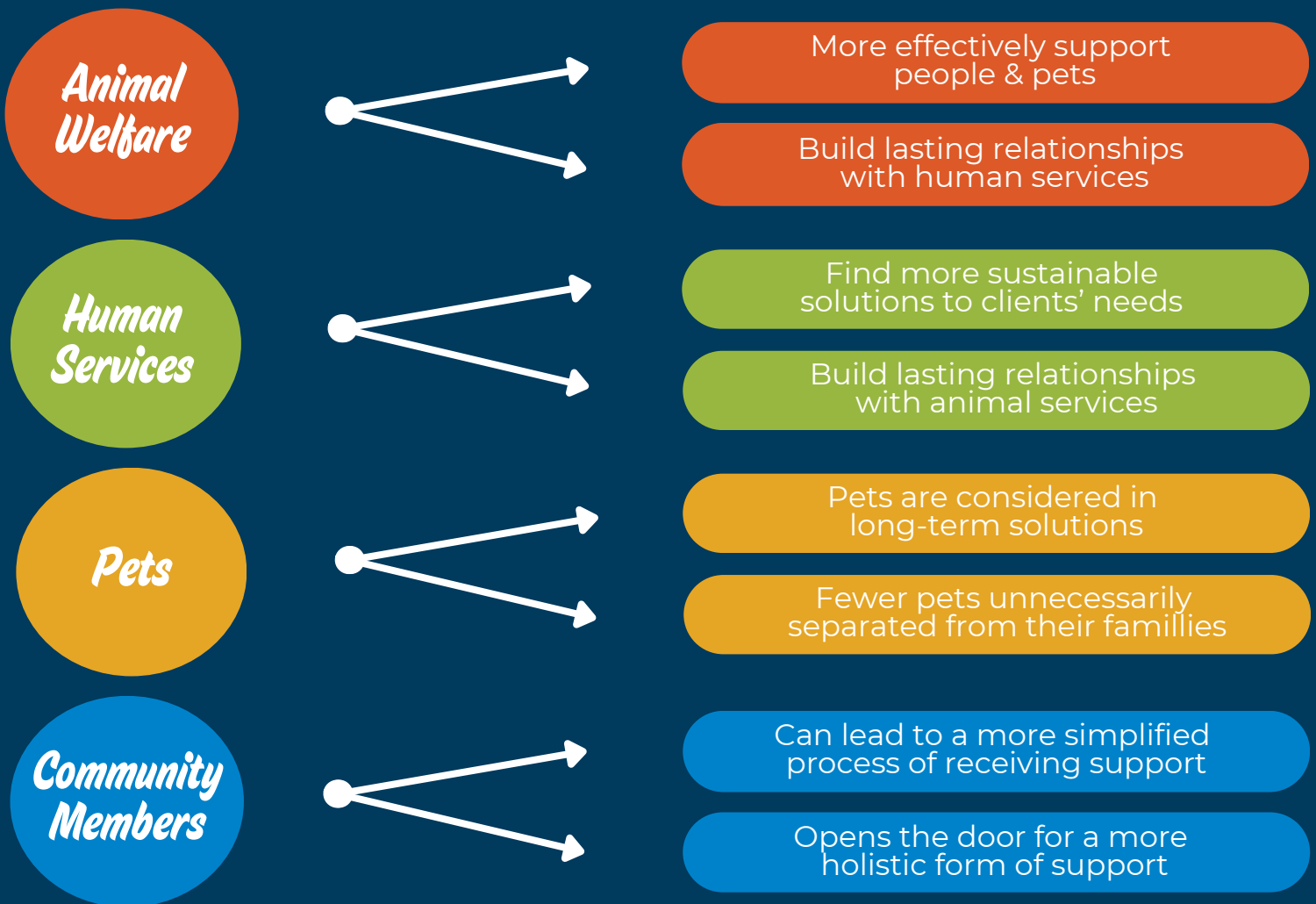
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WHAT IS THE GOAL?

Identify collaborative opportunities between human and animal welfare services to provide social service programs that support BOTH ends of the leash, removing barriers that prevent families from receiving the help they need.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?



STEP 1: DEVELOP A SOCIAL SERVICES “ECOSYSTEM MAP”



ECOSYSTEM MAPPING
*compiling information and creating accessible tools
detailing all community providers relevant to a specific project within a service area*

longitude	latitude	name
-79.1639199	37.4159163	Jefferson Park
-79.1646507	37.4342727	Lynchburg Fire Department
-79.1647033	37.4027203	Lynchburg Parks & Recreation
-79.1647143	37.4027381	Miller Park Neighborhood Center
-79.1659449	37.3846535	Animal Emergency & Critical Care of Lynchburg
-79.1661796	37.3831335	Lynchburg Comprehensive Treatment Center
-79.1666419	37.4367627	Miriam's House
-79.1666419	37.4367627	Miriam's House
-79.1667979	37.4075277	E C Glass High School
-79.1670654	37.4028807	Park View Community Mission
-79.1670654	37.4028807	Park View Community Mission
-79.1670654	37.4028807	Park View Community Mission
-79.1671537	37.2880063	Four Paws Pet Spa
-79.1675665	37.4041907	Lynchburg Public Library
-79.1679640	37.3945435	Gather Lynchburg
-79.1687039	37.4136883	Centra Health
-79.1687039	37.4136883	Centra Health
-79.1691596	37.4015471	New Praise Temple
-79.1698273	37.4012284	Independent Living
-79.1698273	37.4012284	Independent Living

WHAT DOES ADVANCED MAPPING ACCOMPLISH?

Zip Codes

Census Tracts

CLICK HERE FOR A VIDEO OVERVIEW!

Ecosystem mapping involves creating visual maps that detail all community providers by service category and service area, and helps identify resource hubs that exist outside the animal shelter system.

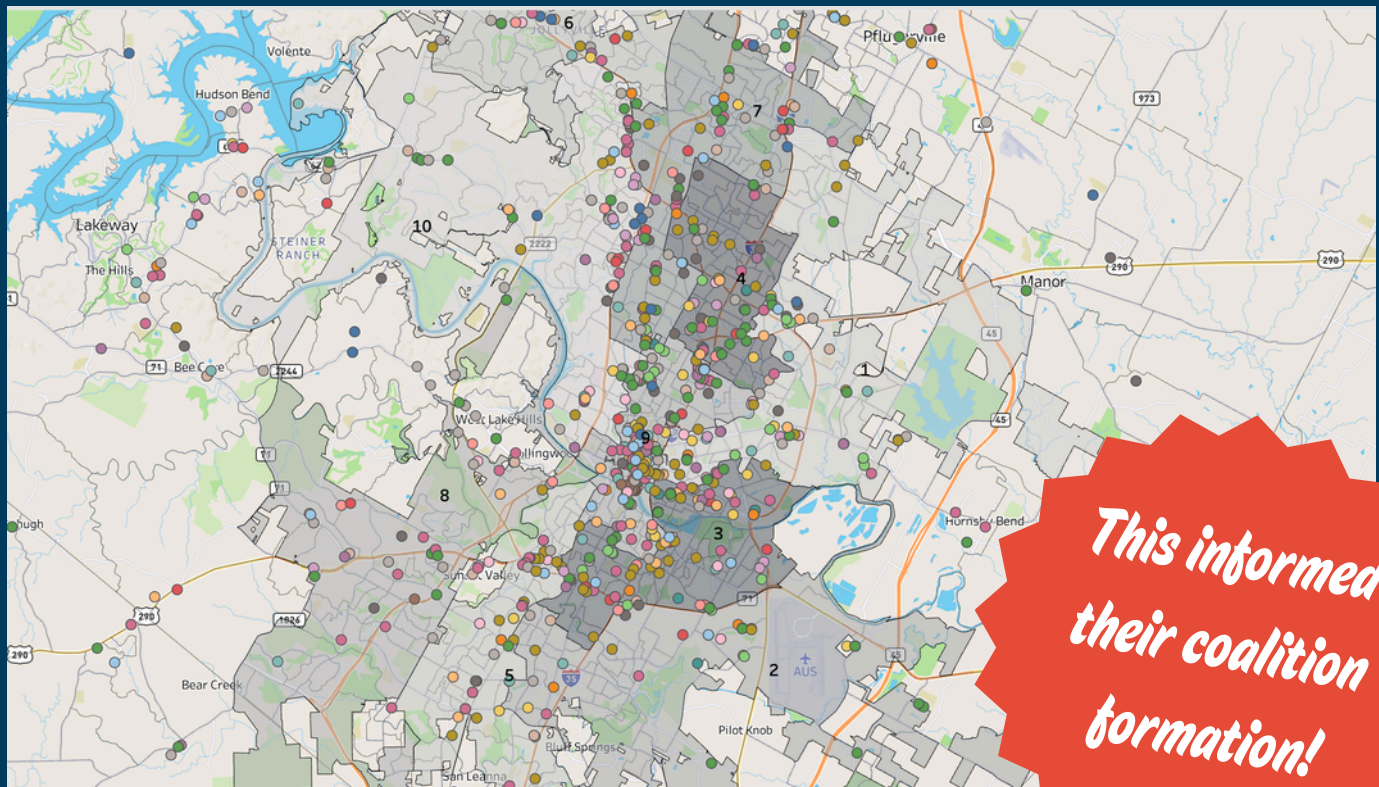
You may **utilize this guide** of suggested search terms. Local municipality websites are also a great place to identify what's available. If needed, ask a volunteer to help research!



STEP 1: DEVELOP A SOCIAL SERVICES “ECOSYSTEM MAP”

Reviewing your shelter data, such as intake locations and client addresses for those seeking pet support services, alongside your ecosystem map, can help you identify areas with higher case concentrations. This will enable you to strategically engage organizations in those communities to better meet clients’ needs.

Take a look at this map created by Austin Pets Alive! that combined their ecosystem map, census blocks, and city council districts. They used this map, paired with their Positive Alternatives to Shelter Surrender (P.A.S.S.) program data, to identify areas of high need.



STEP 2: CREATE AN EVENT INVITATION LIST

After creating your ecosystem map and compiling a list of organizations to contact, begin gathering their contact information.



Consider organizations of **varying sizes, focus areas, locations, and philosophies**. The more voices and representation in the room, the stronger and more effective your efforts will be in serving your community.



Aim to include participants with diverse leadership roles, areas of expertise, and service offerings. It's especially valuable to have multiple representatives from the same organization when they bring perspectives from different departments.



Identify invitees' contact information. You may start with each organization's leadership page and consider calling to confirm the best person to include. Build in time for this outreach, and use [this template](#) to keep all details organized.



STEP 2: CREATE AN EVENT INVITATION LIST



“Should I include other animal welfare organizations in this coalition?”



Keep in mind that we don't want the coalition's work to center solely on animal welfare. Our goal is to address community support from multiple perspectives. Including other animal welfare organizations can be valuable, but we also want to avoid over-representing any one sector.



The aim is to keep the conversation broad enough for different groups to see where they fit, while focused enough to make meaningful progress. Too many organizations from the same field can unintentionally narrow the discussion and limit the comprehensive approach we're trying to build!



STEP 3: RESERVE A 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 first meeting. When inquiring on spaces, 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)?
- Do guests need to know anything prior to arriving (security sign-in, bathroom codes)?
- What does parking look like?
- Ensure the space is accessible for all attendees (ADA compliant)

Once you have an event space reserved, you're ready to send invites!



STEP 4: CONTACT YOUR INVITE LIST

It may be helpful to connect with your contacts by phone before sending invitations. This allows you to establish a personal connection and helps ensure your invitation does not go unnoticed. You might also consider asking a few questions during these conversations to better understand their organization and lay a strong foundation for your first meeting.

Gathering Data and Analysis

Consider these elements when reaching out



Strengths

What are the organization's current strengths and available resources?

.....



Weaknesses

Where is the organization struggling? Where are the gaps in services? What is the most dire need?

.....



Opportunities

What opportunities are present for developing support programming? What is the most effective model for intervention?

.....



Threats

What may get in the way of programming? How will the organizations prepare for threats?



STEP 5: SEND FORMAL MEETING INVITES



Use the **contact information gathered in Step 2** to send invites via email.



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** with an event flyer. This is a great way to jump-start connections and build relationships before the first meeting!



To maximize attendance, it is helpful to **send reminder emails** leading up to the event or make follow-up phone calls.

TIP: Most organizations have spam filters, so do your best to avoid too many attachments or images to avoid landing in the invitee's spam inbox.





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 Coalition!

We understand your work focuses on people, not pets. We're seeking opportunities to collaborate across human and animal welfare organizations to reduce barriers and better support families. Your perspective will help us understand how pet ownership intersects with human services so we can build stronger, more connected solutions for our community.

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]



STEP 6: HOST YOUR FIRST MEETING WITH A THOUGHTFUL, SOLUTION-ORIENTED AGENDA

Share real-life stories.

Consider making a visual presentation to stay on topic.

Bring informational resource sheets outlining the programs your shelter offers.

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

Consider bringing refreshments.

AN EFFECTIVE DISCUSSION INCLUDES

Allow organizations to introduce themselves, share their area of focus, and what brought them to the table.

Ask about common challenges.

Recap action items and think about next steps; Set a recurring meeting schedule for future meetings

Incorporate human-animal bond research to inform and enhance your case.

Discuss Topics like:

- Asking about pet ownership when clients seek support
- Providing sheltering for both people and their pets
- Pet ownership as a barrier to accessing services or support
- Existing relationships with an animal welfare organization

After the event, it's all about putting the solutions discussed into action!



STEP 7: POST-MEETING FOLLOW-UP



**KEEP THE
CONVERSATION
GOING!**

Be sure to **send a follow-up email with any relevant information:** presented materials, attendee contact information, next steps, and helpful links to research or resources.

Develop actionable plans for any tasks resulting from the first meeting's 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 include them in the next discussion! Think about the challenges that came up during the discussion. Are there any social services organizations that can add to the conversation?

Congratulations! You have formed your coalition, and hosted your first meeting!



STEP 8: MOVING YOUR COALITION FORWARD

Now that your coalition is formed and you have discussed challenges, develop a common goal for your group.

You can do this by defining a **shared mission, vision, and areas of impact.**

Here are some **sample goals** your coalition might consider:

- Increase access to pet-inclusive services (e.g., housing, shelters, emergency response).
- Strengthen crisis support so individuals don't have to surrender pets due to temporary hardship.
- Promote public health and safety.
- Enhance cross-sector collaboration between human service providers and animal welfare organizations.
- Advocate for policies that protect the human–animal bond and remove barriers to keeping families together.
- Raise community awareness about available resources for both people and their pets.



STEP 8: MOVING YOUR COALITION FORWARD

COALITION LOGISTICS TO CONSIDER



Structure

- Committees
- Recruiting
- Onboarding
- Frequency and type of meetings
 - In-person vs. virtual



Member Engagement

- Expected participation
- Campaigns
- Learning sessions

Once you have a coalition goal, an established structure, and clear expectations for member engagement, use your meetings to develop your coalition's **strategic plans**.



STEP 8: MOVING YOUR COALITION FORWARD

When creating programs, it can be helpful to consider a few key elements to ensure they are sustainable and well-organized. Using a PEST framework provides a broader, systems-level perspective. Incorporating this type of contextual analysis can also strengthen grant proposals and support initiatives that respond to evolving community conditions.

Initial Exploration and Developing Understanding

P- Political: What factors will impact the program in the larger community and within the organization? Do you need licensing? Is there competition, resistance, or skepticism?
.....

E- Economic: How much will the programs cost? Who will pay? How can costs be reduced?
.....

S- Social: What cultural or social aspects may help or hinder program development, if any?
.....

T- Technological: What technology is needed? Is it already available within your group?



KEY TAKEAWAYS: BUILDING YOUR COALITION



Learn about your community's offerings by developing an ecosystem map. Understanding which service providers exist and communicating effectively through shared data and aligned metrics can strengthen collaboration, support your organization's impact, and help keep people and pets together.



Start planning. Think about meeting spaces, an invite list, resources, and research.



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



Keep the conversation going. Be sure to send a follow-up email with relevant information, schedule additional planning meetings, and lead the charge in project planning.

