

# PAWS Act Coalition Lauds Full Congressional Funding for Grant Program to Aid Survivors of Domestic Violence and their Pets

Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2022 Provides \$3 Million for Pet and Women Safety (PAWS) Act Grant Program

**WASHINGTON (PRWEB) MARCH 16, 2022 --** The Pet and Women Safety (PAWS) Act Coalition today celebrated the passage of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2022, which for the third year in a row, includes funding for an important grant program designed to enable more domestic violence shelters to become pet-friendly so that victims of domestic violence and their pets may seek safe shelter together. The \$3 million appropriated for 2022 represents a \$500,000 increase in funding from 2021, up to the fully-authorized amount, and comes three years after bipartisan passage of the Pet and Women Safety (PAWS) Act, as part of the 2018 Farm Bill.

“Congressional funding for the PAWS Act, coupled with private sector support, directly results in more domestic abuse survivors and their pets being able to safely enter shelter and start the next chapter of their lives together,” said Nina Leigh Krueger, CEO and President of Purina. “Through Purina’s partnership with RedRover on the Purple Leash Project, we’ve set a national goal to help ensure that at least 25% of domestic violence shelters in the U.S. are pet-friendly by 2025. Full funding of the PAWS Act keeps this goal within reach.”

Demand for the Emergency Transitional Pet Shelter Housing and Assistance Grant Program has continually surpassed the funding available for the program, leading to bipartisan calls to further increase funding in 2022.

The PAWS Act Coalition honors the bipartisan efforts of 204 Representatives, led by Representative Katherine Clark (D-MA-5), and 43 Senators, led by Senators Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) and Gary Peters (D-MI), for requesting this critical funding for FY 2022.

Domestic violence shelters across the U.S. will be eligible to apply online for grants in the coming months, and additional details about the application process will be forthcoming from the U.S. Department of Justice, which administers the grant program.

This continued funding follows the success of the FY 2020 and FY 2021 Emergency Transitional Pet Shelter Housing and Assistance Grant Programs, which awarded approximately \$2 million to six organizations in six states across the nation in 2020 and a total of \$2.42 million to five organizations in 2021. Future grants will provide emergency and transitional shelter and housing assistance or short-term shelter and housing assistance for domestic violence victims with pets, service animals, emotional support animals, or horses. Grants awarded may also be used for programs that provide support services designed to enable someone fleeing domestic violence to locate and secure safe housing with their pet,

safe accommodations for their pet, or related services such as transportation and other assistance.

“The PAWS Act Coalition looks forward to working with the U.S. Department of Justice to raise awareness of this grant program so that more eligible organizations and programs access this funding,” said Steven Feldman, President of the Human Animal Bond Research Institute (HABRI). “We are heartened to see funding for this program rise to its fully-authorized amount of \$3 million, reflecting the reality that people need to seek safety and overcome trauma with pets by their side.”

Organizations in the PAWS Act coalition include:

- Purina (Nestlé Purina PetCare)
- Human Animal Bond Research Institute (HABRI)
- Noah’s Animal House
- Pet Partners
- RedRover
- Urban Resource Institute (URI)

Two of these organizations, Noah’s Animal House and Urban Resource Institute, are part of the less than 20% of domestic violence shelters across the country that actively offer co-shelter services to keep both pets and their owners away from the dangers of domestic abuse. Together these two incredible organizations have saved over 2,500 pets from abusive conditions, so that no domestic violence survivor is forced to choose between staying in an abusive relationship and leaving their pet with their abuser.

Did you know?

- Nearly half (up to 48%) of domestic violence victims remain with an abuser out of fear for their pets’ safety.
- According to the Centers for Disease Control, 4,774,000 women in the United States experience physical violence by an intimate partner every year.
- The majority of domestic violence situations include pets in the household, and 85% of women residing in domestic violence shelters reported a pet was harmed by their abuser.
- A growing body of science has demonstrated a link between domestic violence and animal cruelty. An outlet of emotional support for victims, the family pet often becomes a target for physical abuse.

“Since the launch of our groundbreaking [People and Animals Living Safely \(PALS\)](#) program in 2013, we have experienced tremendous growth in our trauma-informed programming and capacity to provide survivors of domestic abuse with a safe place to live and heal together with their pets,” said Nathaniel M. Fields, Chief Executive Officer of Urban Resource Institute. “Our [PALS Report & Survey on Domestic Violence and Pets: Breaking Barriers to Safety & Healing](#) found that 50% will not leave a dangerous situation without their pets, and 72% did not know some shelters accommodate pets. As dedicated members of the coalition, we are encouraged by the continuation of the PAWS Act grant program in providing more resources to domestic violence service providers around the country adopting pet-friendly options.”

“Since 2007, Noah’s Animal House has protected over 2,100 pets for more than 110,000

boarding nights, serving clients from over 33 states in the U.S, in addition to our home state of Nevada. Women drove thousands of miles from Florida, Oklahoma, Maine, Texas and others, driving past other women's shelters in every state for one reason only, their pet had to be included in their escape plan," said Staci Columbo Alonso, founder of Noah's Animal House. "With the PAWS Act grant program entering its third year, we look forward to seeing more resources allocated to shelters and organizations across the country so that domestic violence survivors won't have to travel far to locate safe shelter with their companion animals."

"In support of the PAWS Act Coalition, Pet Partners grassroots advocates made their voices heard during every step of the legislative process: recruiting key co-sponsors in the Senate, supporting passage of the Senate Farm Bill, targeting members of the Conference Committee, and building support in communities across the country. Thanks to their continued efforts, thousands of constituent messages, tweets, and phone calls to Congress were made emphasizing the importance of these provisions. Pet Partners is grateful for their actions that will help pets and people remain together in traumatic situations – when they need each other most," said Annie Peters, CEO of Pet Partners.

"Since 2007, RedRover has awarded more than \$3 million in grant funding to help domestic violence survivors and their pets escape abusers," said RedRover CEO and President, Nicole Forsyth. "We're thrilled the PAWS Act grant program will continue with increased funding and resources to enable more survivors and their pets to seek safety together and begin their journey of healing."

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### **About Purina**

Nestlé Purina PetCare creates richer lives for pets and the people who love them. Founded in 1894, Purina has helped dogs and cats live longer, healthier lives by offering scientifically based nutritional innovations. Purina manufactures some of the world's most trusted and popular pet care products, including Purina ONE, Pro Plan, Fancy Feast and Tidy Cats. Our more than 8,700 U.S. associates take pride in our trusted pet food, treat and litter brands that feed 51 million dogs and 65 million cats every year. More than 500 Purina scientists, veterinarians, and pet care experts ensure our commitment to unsurpassed quality and nutrition.

Purina promotes responsible pet care through our scientific research, our products and our support for pet-related organizations. Over the past five years, Purina has contributed more than \$150 million towards organizations that bring, and keep, people and pets together, as well as those that help our communities and environment thrive.

Purina is part of Nestlé, a global leader in Nutrition, Health and Wellness. For more information, visit <https://www.purina.com> or [Subscribe here](#) to get the latest Purina news.

### **About Pet Partners**

Pet Partners is the national leader in demonstrating and promoting the health and wellness

benefits of animal-assisted therapy, activities, and education. Since the organization's inception in 1977, the science proving these benefits has become indisputable. With thousands of registered teams making millions of visits annually, Pet Partners serves as the nation's most diverse and respected nonprofit registering handlers of multiple species as volunteer teams. Pet Partners teams visit with patients in recovery, people with intellectual disabilities, seniors living with Alzheimer's, students, veterans with PTSD, people who have experienced crisis events, and those approaching end of life, with the goal of improving human health and well-being through the human-animal bond. With the release of its Standards of Practice for Animal-Assisted Interventions and international expansion, Pet Partners is globally recognized as the industry gold standard. For more information on Pet Partners, visit <http://www.petpartners.org>.

### **About Urban Resource Institute**

Urban Resource Institute (URI) helps transform the lives of domestic violence survivors and homeless families, with a focus on communities of color and other vulnerable populations, to end cycles of violence, poverty, and trauma. As the largest provider of domestic violence shelter services in the US and a leading provider of homeless services, URI's innovative programs impact more than 40,000 individuals annually through prevention, intervention, education, and direct services in both residential and non-residential settings, including the pioneering People and Animals Living Safely (PALS) program for domestic violence survivors and pets. With a trauma-informed approach to program development and service delivery, URI is uniquely equipped to provide solutions to the challenges affecting New York City's most vulnerable populations while influencing service delivery in other parts of the U.S. and the world. For more information, please visit <http://www.urinyc.org>.

### **About Noah's Animal House**

Noah's Animal House was the first stand-alone full service pet boarding facility in the country built on the grounds of and in partnership with The Shade Tree Shelter in 2007 to provide safety, shelter and support for the pets of the clients of the shelter. A second location serving up to 36 animals in Reno, Nevada opened February 2018 in partnership with the Domestic Violence Resource Center. In a national survey, 71 percent of women seeking safety in a domestic violence shelter reported pet abuse in their home and more than 25 percent delayed leaving because they did not have an escape plan that could include their pets. To learn more about Noah's Animal House, visit <https://noahsanimalhouse.org>.

### **About RedRover**

Since 1987, RedRover has focused on bringing animals out of crisis and strengthening the human-animal bond through emergency sheltering, disaster relief services, financial assistance, and education. Since 2007, RedRover has awarded 1,192 Safe Escape grants, totaling more than \$894,000 and equaling 51,424 safe nights for 1,644 pets. Since 2012, RedRover has given 165 grants to shelters in 46 states, totaling more than \$2.1 million and equaling more than 387,200 safe nights for pets. Additionally, Safe Housing grants have created the first pet-friendly domestic violence shelter in 10 states! To learn how RedRover is creating a more compassionate world, visit <http://www.RedRover.org>.

**About HABRI**

HABRI is a not-for-profit organization that maintains the world's largest online library of human-animal bond research and information; funds innovative research projects to scientifically document the health benefits of companion animals; and informs the public about human-animal bond research and the beneficial role of companion animals in society. For more information, please visit <http://www.habri.org>.

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