



Celebrating
10
Years

People & Animals Living Safely (PALS)

The Intersection of Domestic Violence and Pets

For individuals facing domestic violence, the presence of a pet can be both a great comfort and a barrier to safety. Pets are family, and the emotional support and physical protection they provide is critical, especially in times of crises. This human-animal bond is often exploited by abusers and used as an additional leverage to threaten and control their victims, adding to the trauma. Research from our PALS Report and Survey revealed that **50% of domestic violence survivors** would not leave their abusers and seek shelter without their pets.

It is estimated that less than **10% of domestic violence shelters** in the U.S. provide co-sheltering options for people and their pets to live and heal together. There are clear reasons for this sad reality. For most domestic violence shelter providers, much of the funding to serve human victims comes from government sources, and the innovative approach to include pets in shelter programs receives little or no government support. Most funders—government and non-government—have not caught up with the intersection of pets and domestic violence, and do not provide funding to support the inclusion of pets in domestic violence services. This can be especially true in urban areas where options for pets are limited due to a lack of space, but it is a challenge faced by domestic violence shelter providers wherever they are located.

Stay Together. Heal Together.

Since 1980, Urban Resource Institute (URI), the **largest provider of domestic violence shelter services in the country** and oldest in New York State, has been committed to the vision of a world free of domestic violence, homelessness, poverty, and trauma. To address the intersection of domestic

violence and pets, URI launched the groundbreaking People and Animals Living Safely (PALS) program in 2013. PALS provides co-living in URI's domestic violence shelters, where families live in the same apartment with their pets as they heal from trauma together. PALS was the first and is still the only New York City program offering co-living, and it continues to be a **pioneer in the U.S. for domestic violence and pets.**

A Decade of Impact

For ten years PALS has been committed to cultivating safe and secure spaces for individuals and families with pets to **stay together and heal together.** Our impact is reflected in the hundreds of families who've entered our residences finding safety and experiencing the emotional and physical health benefits of living with the animals they love.

With a dedicated and growing staff of animal welfare and human service experts, the PALS Program boasts a robust team that focuses on providing **client-centered, trauma-informed care to survivors and their pets.** Through unique and impactful collaboration with animal welfare partners and funders, URI is able to provide all necessary pet medical, living, and enrichment needs to PALS families during their time in shelter, allowing pets and people to heal together.

URI shares PALS as an **example and model for other organizations to adopt and adapt** so fewer families are forced to choose between their pet's safety and their own. URI is dedicated to strengthening the understanding and acceptance of the **human-animal bond in times of trauma,** and the **need and capacity for pet-friendly domestic violence services** on a national scale. The PALS team can work with agencies and service providers on evaluation, advocacy, and resources to address the intersection of pets and domestic violence in their own programs and communities.

“As long as we were apart from our dog, the family was incomplete. I was ecstatic that there was a shelter that would welcome my entire family during this difficult time.”

~ Hope, former client



PALS Outreach

6,844

Individuals in other organizations were provided training by PALS

PALS Survey Findings

- 50%** will not leave an abusive situation without their pets
- 86%** say their pet provides emotional support
- 72%** do not know some shelters accommodate pets
- 37%** reported abusive partner threatened to harm or kill pet(s)

PALS Apartment Units

