



Here for dogs - for life



**Strategic
Plan
2021-23**

For 130 years, Dogs Trust, our affiliate organization, has been committed to helping dogs live safe and happy lives - lives that get to take place in warm and secure homes, with nutritious food and good healthcare, and in the company of humans that care for them. In that time, they've become the UK's leading dog welfare charity, offered a helping hand to countless dog owners, and established a global Dogs Trust community.

And now, I'm pleased to say, that community is growing even larger. With more than 97 million dogs living in the USA, and dog ownership growing every year, it seems obvious to us that we need to be on the ground and helping to make a difference to those lives.

Although the US is clearly filled with people who love dogs, our research shows that too many of our American canine friends are having their lives cut short. This is often due to behavioral problems, overwhelmed shelter staff and limited resources – all issues that we know can be put right.

In the following pages, you'll read about the work we're already doing as Dogs Trust USA to help address those problems, as well as our blueprint for the next three years. It's a plan that is built on partnership, from supporting small community run US-based non-profits to larger groups – we want to collaborate far and wide to make sure we benefit as many dogs as possible.

None of this would be possible without your support. It's because of you that we can expand our reach and help more and more dogs around the US – thank you.

By continuing to work together with owners and supporters, we'll never let a dog down and we can carry on making sure that A Dog Is For Life®.



Owen Sharp

President, Dogs Trust USA

Introduction

It's been a tough year for everyone, filled with worry and uncertainty – the pandemic has changed all our lives, including the lives of dogs.

The past months have brought home the importance of the special bond that exists between a dog and their owner. During these unprecedented circumstances, we know that a lot of comfort has been found in canine companionship.

But we also know that a lot of dogs have had it tough. There have been fewer chances for them to socialize, financial worries for owners, and in-person training has been less accessible.

Shelters across the USA have been doing their best, but we know that demand is high and limited resources make their lives difficult. Every year, 5.4 million dogs and cats enter US animal shelters – and of those, 625,000 end up losing their lives. That's 1,700 dogs and cats euthanized every single day, simply because rescue organizations don't have capacity for them.

Dog abandonment is a huge concern for us, too. Research has shown that 45% of dogs are given up due to behavioral issues – issues that we know can often be put right with positive training and lots of care.

**97 million
dogs in USA**

**2.47 million
dogs taken in by
shelters and rescue
organizations each year**

**1,700
dogs and cats euthanized
every day because there's
no room for them**

**45%
of dogs in shelters were
given up because of
solvable behavioral issues**

We're dedicated solely to dog welfare, we want to make sure that dogs are always looked after – no matter what's going on in the wider world.

This document details what we aim to achieve over the next three years, and how we plan to do it. We have six strategic goals, each intent on making lasting change on one of the key issues facing dogs and their owners today.

We have experience and passion behind us. And we're confident that together, we can make sure more dogs and their humans live happy and healthy lives together.



We love dogs

That's why we do whatever we can to make sure every four-legged friend gets the love they deserve. Everything we do as an organization aims to help us achieve our vision and mission.

Vision:

We believe every dog deserves a safe and happy life.

Mission:

We're helping dogs and people to live better together - through education, training and support.

Strategic Goals:

- 1 To strengthen the bond between dogs and people**
By raising awareness of positive dog training methods and making training accessible and affordable for everyone
- 2 To give every dog the best chance of finding their forever home**
By supporting rescue organizations with behavior expertise so that they can rehabilitate and rehome more dogs
- 3 To reduce the number of dogs who have their lives cut short**
By supporting community shelters with training and financial support
- 4 To offer a helping hand for dog owners**
By providing the tools and resources dog owners need to understand their responsibilities
- 5 To lead the way in dog welfare**
By sharing our expertise and helping smaller organizations reach their potential
- 6 To build a better future for all dogs in the US**
By growing Dogs Trust USA's income, infrastructure and partnerships so that we can care for as many four-legged friends as possible



Goal 1

To strengthen the bond between dogs and people

By raising awareness of positive dog training methods and making training accessible and affordable for everyone.

What's the need?

Too many dogs are being abandoned because of fixable problem behaviors

Having a dog in your life is a privilege. But unfortunately, across the US, huge numbers of our canine friends are being abandoned. It boils down to two main reasons – behavior problems and health issues.

In fact, research shows that the biggest reason for dogs being handed over to shelters is problem behaviors – most of which can be addressed with the right training and support.

And although excellent dog training is available across the US, we know that due to cost and location, it isn't always accessible to everyone.

When dog owners have access to the right guidance to train their four-legged buddies, problem behaviors can be prevented, and their special bonds can be strengthened. To make sure this happens, owners and their furry friends sometimes just need a helping hand. That's where we come in.

How do we fix it?

Training that helps dogs and owners live better together

While some training methods are based around 'dominance' and 'pack theory', we know from experience that these can lead to more severe problems for dogs later in life. Training that uses treats, encouraging words or a 'well done!' fuss – otherwise known as positive training – leads to happy dogs and happy owners.

By giving dog owners the information and support they need to train with their buddies, behavioral problems can be avoided and firm friendships can be made.

To increase the number of dogs that are able to stay at home with their humans, we want to make sure that training is accessible, no matter the circumstances – that's why we're launching Dogs Trust USA Dog School.

With the right guidance owners can prevent problem behaviors themselves



What we're going to do

Making life-changing training available to everyone – no matter what

Offering expert led training programs that combine essential advice with fun games, Dog School USA will provide a space for both dogs and people to learn and grow together.

Year 1

Starting in May 2021, we'll introduce Dog School USA to adopters and dog owners in New York, and towards the end of the year expand out to Los Angeles. Working with our shelter partners, Dog School USA will offer fun, affordable and accessible online dog training classes, using tried and tested positive training methods.

As time goes on, we'll start offering in-person classes and we'll be looking to pass on what we know about good training to others. Where we can, we'll be training a Dog School Coach at each of our partner organizations, meaning a brighter long-term future for the dogs in their care.

Year 2

We want as many dogs to benefit from Dog School USA as possible, so in year two offer even more sessions. We're especially excited to explore the huge potential of online classes, so that we can help as many playful pooches as possible.

Year 3

In our third year, we'll continue to look at how we can make Dog School USA bigger and better. We'll be growing the Dog School USA family by hiring new staff, and looking to the future rollout of the schools.

No matter what stage of life a dog is at, Dog School USA wants to help. By providing owners with the right tools, as well as the confidence to train their dogs in a fun and engaging way, we'll be giving both them and their canine companions the chance to build a strong and long-lasting friendship.



Goal 2

To give every dog the best chance of finding their forever home

By supporting rescue organizations with behavior expertise so that they can rehabilitate and rehome more dogs.

What's the need?

Dogs with behavior problems aren't getting specialist support

Dog shelters, both big and small, are full to the brim with kind and caring people who want dogs to have safe and happy lives.

But staff and resources in non-profits are limited. Through no fault of their own, staff training levels end up varying from shelter to shelter. When dogs who have had difficult starts come to stay, they're not always getting the specialist support they need - meaning they're less likely to be rehabilitated and rehomed.

Dogs are happier and healthier when they're given the full attention of an expert who understands their behavior. So how do we make sure that happens every time it needs to?

love for dogs

How do we fix it?

Give all dogs the chance to receive expert help

We can help get dogs on a path to a better life.

At the moment, the playing field isn't level for dogs across the USA - the amount of expert support they get is determined by chance.

We're going to work with shelters and rescues to share what we know about dealing with problem behaviors. By training staff and volunteers, they'll then have a well-rounded set of skills to help dogs that need that little bit of extra care.

And by increasing expertise levels in shelters and rescue organizations, dogs across the country will be given a better chance of finding their forever homes.

What we're going to do

Share our dog behavior knowledge with US rescue organizations

We will help shelters and rescue organizations build upon their dog behavior and rehabilitation expertise - increasing dogs' chances of finding their new best friend.

Year 1

Starting in New York and Los Angeles, we'll work with our partners to identify their organization's needs and develop a tailored training program that works for them and their dogs.

Then, we'll work with those shelters to share knowledge with staff and volunteers. By training mentors within the organizations, staff will be supported for many years to come.

Year 2

Once the program is up and running, we'll be looking to help more and more shelters and rescue organizations - the more people we can train, the more dogs we can help.

Year 3

By 2023, we'll be able to award our first signature grants - providing the money needed that will help our partner organizations to fund specialist behavior work.

Alongside giving staff the opportunity to expand their understanding, this work will have a direct positive impact on the lives of those dogs that need a little bit of extra time and attention.

Professional Development Program

- providing a trusted and affordable training program to shelter and rescue staff across the US



Goal 3

To reduce the number of dogs who have their lives cut short

By supporting community shelters with training and financial support.

What's the need?

Too many dogs are being abandoned or losing their lives across the US

We want every dog in the US to be happy and healthy. To get there, we first need to make sure that they're safe.

Sadly, we know all too well that there are dogs across the country that aren't living lives safe from harm. Dogs are being abandoned because of 'bad' behavior (the kind that we know can be addressed with the right knowhow and a lot of TLC) and in many cases because of health issues.

In the absolute worst case scenarios, dogs are being killed unnecessarily. Dogs that we know could have gone on to live better, had the right help been available.

625,000
dogs and cats euthanized
each year because shelters
simply don't have capacity

2.47 million
dogs are given up to shelters
and rescues every year

What we're going to do

Fund crucial community work and share our knowledge

Since we launched in 2018, we've supported 30 rescue organizations and shelters across the USA.

We're going to continue to do just that, offering grants and expertise to organizations that need additional help to do their very best work for dogs.



30
shelters and rescues
supported since 2018

Over the next three years, we'll continue to invest in the Dogs Trust USA Open Grant Program, as well as increasing our grant budget. Areas of the country where dogs have the worst outcomes will be made a priority for our support.

We'll also launch an annual 'Innovation Award', encouraging rescue organizations to submit ideas that tackle the root causes of dog abandonment and end dogs' lives prematurely.

By investing at a local level, we'll be investing in the future safety, happiness and health of our nation's dogs.

Goal 4

To offer a helping hand for dog owners

By providing the tools and resources dog owners need to understand their responsibilities.

What's the need?

Dog owners need the right information to care for their four-legged friends

Getting to share your life with a dog is one of the greatest joys imaginable. Our dogs offer unconditional love, companionship and the best couch snuggles going – and in return, we should give them the same.

But with an enormous amount of conflicting information available online for prospective and new dog owners, it can be difficult and confusing to know which sources they should trust. What should be an exciting time in their lives can quickly become overwhelming.

When dog owners or prospective dog owners can't get the answers they need, it's their canine friends that suffer. They might experience behavior or health problems, and some owners that are struggling to cope will end up having to give up their faithful friend.

How do we fix it?

Responsible dog owners need reliable information

So that owners can be the best friend that their dog deserves, we have to make sure that trustworthy information is available – both before people choose to bring a dog into their family and once it's happened.

When they're deciding if they should own a dog, potential owners will need to read up about all sorts of things – from which breed will best fit with their lifestyle, to the costs of having a dog and the importance of pet insurance.

Once the decision has been made, the questions will keep on coming. What food should they be eating at what age? Are they suffering from separation anxiety? What are the best training methods?

By offering a reliable place to find the answers to all those questions (and more), dogs and their humans will have the best possible start to their life-long relationship.

Supporting owners keeps families together and makes dogs happier at home

What we're going to do

Provide clear and trustworthy advice to dog owners

We all need a little extra help sometimes. That's why over the next three years, we'll launch a Dogs Trust USA Toolkit which will be available to all dog owners across the USA. Think of it as the ultimate guidebook for all things dog – offering words of wisdom, tips and expert advice.

By giving people the key information they need to look after their four-legged friends, dog owners will be able to rest easy. Whenever they have a question or a concern, they can turn to our guide to help them figure things out.

And most importantly, this is fantastic news for the more than 97 million dogs that live in the United States. When people have the right tools to become responsible owners, things only ever get better for their dogs. Bonds between dogs and their humans will be strengthened, and the likelihood of them suffering health or behavioral issues will decrease.

One trusted resource for owners everywhere



Goal 5

To lead the way in dog welfare

By sharing our expertise and helping smaller organizations reach their potential.

What's the need?

Thousands of shelters don't have access to training, research and funding

There are over 13,000 shelters and rescues in the United States. That's incredible and reflects our country's commitment to looking after its millions of furry friends.

But a lot of these organizations are small and don't have access to the resources that they need to reach their full potential.

We believe that the USA needs a group that can lead the way on dog welfare specifically. That can help those thousands of small organizations to succeed through guidance, training, funding and the sharing of knowledge and research.

**Over
13,000
shelters and rescue
organizations**

**2.47 million
dogs entered shelters
in 2019**

How do we fix it?

Providing strong leadership on dog welfare issues

With clear guidance from a trusted voice, those thousands of shelters and rescues will be able to do even more to improve the lives of dogs in the US.

Funding needs to be more readily available for programs that need it, as well as practical guidance and support for the passionate people who run them.

Underpinning all of that should be up-to-date research, so that we can be confident that the way we care for dogs is backed up by evidence.

What we're going to do

Invest in research, share ideas and raise dog welfare standards

Dogs Trust USA is the only global non-profit working in America that's dedicated to dogs and dogs alone. That's why we think we're well placed to steer the way for the country's shelters and organizations that are working to improve conditions for dogs.

We want to share what we know about dog welfare, offer practical guidance and financial support to the programs that need it, and fund new research that will benefit all of those who work with and care for dogs.

Year 1

To improve life for dogs in the US in the future, it's important that we understand the state of things right here and now.

Through our Dog School USA pilots and the professional development program, we'll gain a greater understanding of our partners and their needs. We'll be able to use this information to make sure those programs are as effective as possible before they're rolled out on a wider scale.

Year 2

We're going to launch a number of research projects, to deepen our understanding around dog welfare trends and the habits of dog owners in the US. This data will shape what we do in the future and help to set best practice for all the shelters and rescue organizations across the US.

Year 3

We'll share what we've learnt about US dog owners, so that others who care about dogs can use it to inform their own work.

Throughout all of this, collaboration will be key. We want to work with others who have dogs' best interests at heart, so that together we can make sure that the millions of dogs in the US are happy, safe and healthy.

**We can be
the trusted
voice on dog
welfare**

Goal 6

To build a better future for all dogs in the US

By growing Dogs Trust USA's income, infrastructure and partnerships so that we can care for as many four-legged friends as possible.

What's the need?

More than 97 million dogs in the US – each needing care and support

We make no bones about it – our job at Dogs Trust USA is a big one. There are millions of dogs in the United States, and each one deserves a life filled with love, security and tasty treats.

We know that we're not there yet. It's going to take a lot of hard work, determination and passionate people to make sure that every dog in our country is looked after.

But we believe we've got a plan that will help.

Everything we do aims to give every dog a safe and happy life



How do we fix it?

Growing the organization so we can reach more and more dogs

In order to reduce the number of dogs that are abandoned, to make sure that their lives are long and happy, and to help shelters and rescues around the USA, we have to continue to build our organization.

By making sure that Dogs Trust USA is in a secure place when it comes to things like income and partnerships, we'll be in a good position to deliver what we've set out in our strategic goals and to protect the future of dogs for generations to come.

What we're going to do

Expand our team, raise awareness and develop partnerships

We want our work to reach as many people as possible. We want to raise awareness of Dogs Trust USA and to shout as loud as we can about what can be done to make the States a better place for dogs.

Over the next few years, we want to really get to know dog owners in the US. We want to understand them as best we can, so that we can make sure the support we provide to them and their pooches is as good as it can be.

Year 1

Without donors and fundraisers, we couldn't do what we do. So our first priority is to build awareness and support – connecting with other people who are passionate about dogs and dog welfare and who can fund our work. We aim to make sure our expert advice is available to as many people as possible. We want dog owners to know that we're here for them, so we'll be putting a lot of time and effort into getting our message and resources out across the country.

Year 2

Teamwork is key to getting our work done, which is why we'll be expanding the Dogs Trust USA family. In our second year, this will mean recruiting more passionate fundraisers to our fundraising team, as well as looking at new partnerships with other research experts.

Year 3

In our third year, we'll be working to get our Dog Toolkit out to as many people as possible, talking to as many dog owners in the US as we can, and expanding our leadership team of both professionals and volunteers.

We'll be looking to the future during the next few years and thinking about how we can expand, always keeping our vision in mind – a safe and happy life for every dog.

**This is our
three-year plan
to make real
lasting change.
To make the USA
a better place to be
a dog, and to make
sure every dog in
America has the
safe and happy life
they deserve.**

Together, our Professional Development Program, Grant Funding Program and Dog Schools aim to tackle the three main problems facing dogs in the USA today; access and affordability to expert training, overstretched resources and funding in local shelters, and dogs being abandoned by their owners because of behavior problems that could be resolved.

Our toolkit of resources for dog owners and our ongoing support for local shelters, rescue organizations and other non-profits will help the many thousands of dog lovers around the country to better support dogs in their area for many more years to come.

We're here to help dogs at every point in their life. And to help dogs and people to live better together.

6699

I've loved getting to know Dogs Trust USA over the past few years, and I am so excited to see how their model can flourish in the US. When we got our rescue pup he was not used to a big city and training was invaluable, so it's great to see a group like Dogs Trust USA kick off this training program in NYC and LA.

Carrie Denning Jackson
The Ripple Foundation



**Dogs Trust USA is an affiliate organization of
Dogs Trust in the UK and Dogs Trust Worldwide.
Dogs Trust has been leading the way in dog welfare
in the UK since 1891. By working together, we're
here for dogs and owners across the world, doing
everything we can to make tomorrow's world
a better place to be a dog. Together, we'll never
let a dog down and make sure A Dog Is For Life®.**

**To get involved, donate
or generally show the dogs your love,**

**Find us online, or give us a call
www.dogstrustusa.org**

Meredith Beck
Vice President of
Development
meredith.beck@
dogstrustusa.org
Cell: 646-717-7920

Please write to us at:
Dogs Trust USA,
155 E. 44th Street,
6th Floor, Suite 34,
New York, NY 10017



A dog is for life, not just for the holidays

Founded in 2017, Dogs Trust USA Inc. is a 501 (c) (3) not-for-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of dogs across the United States - and around the world. Our EIN number is 82-2390086. Contributions are tax deductible in accordance with IRS rules and regulations.