

Humane Society Offers Estate Planning Kits

Free kits include information on planning for cats' care after owners' death.

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The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), which has been promoting the need to plan properly for pets in estate plans, is offering a free kit on the topic to anyone.

The kit, "Providing for Your Pet's Future Without You," comes with a six-page fact sheet, sample language for a will, wallet alert cards, emergency decals for windows and doors and caregiver information forms.

The goal is to educate pet owners and professionals to think more broadly about the topic of providing for pets in estate plans so that animal friends can be protected in the event of an owner's death or severe disability, according to HSUS spokesman Robert Blizzard.

The kit was developed by the HSUS's legal and animal sheltering staffs, the Humane Society says, because shelters frequently see informal, unwritten and/or weak plans for animal companions go awry.

The free kit urges people to provide for pets in documents other than a will, because a will may not be read for months after a pet owner's death. Or, if the pet owner is alive but incapacitated, the will isn't read at all.

For more information, visit the HSUS website: www.hsus.org/pettrusts. For the full kit, visit www.hsus.org/petsinwills, call (202) 452-1100, email petsinwills@hsus.org or write Humane Legacy, The HSUS, 2100 L St. NW, Washington, D.C., 20037.