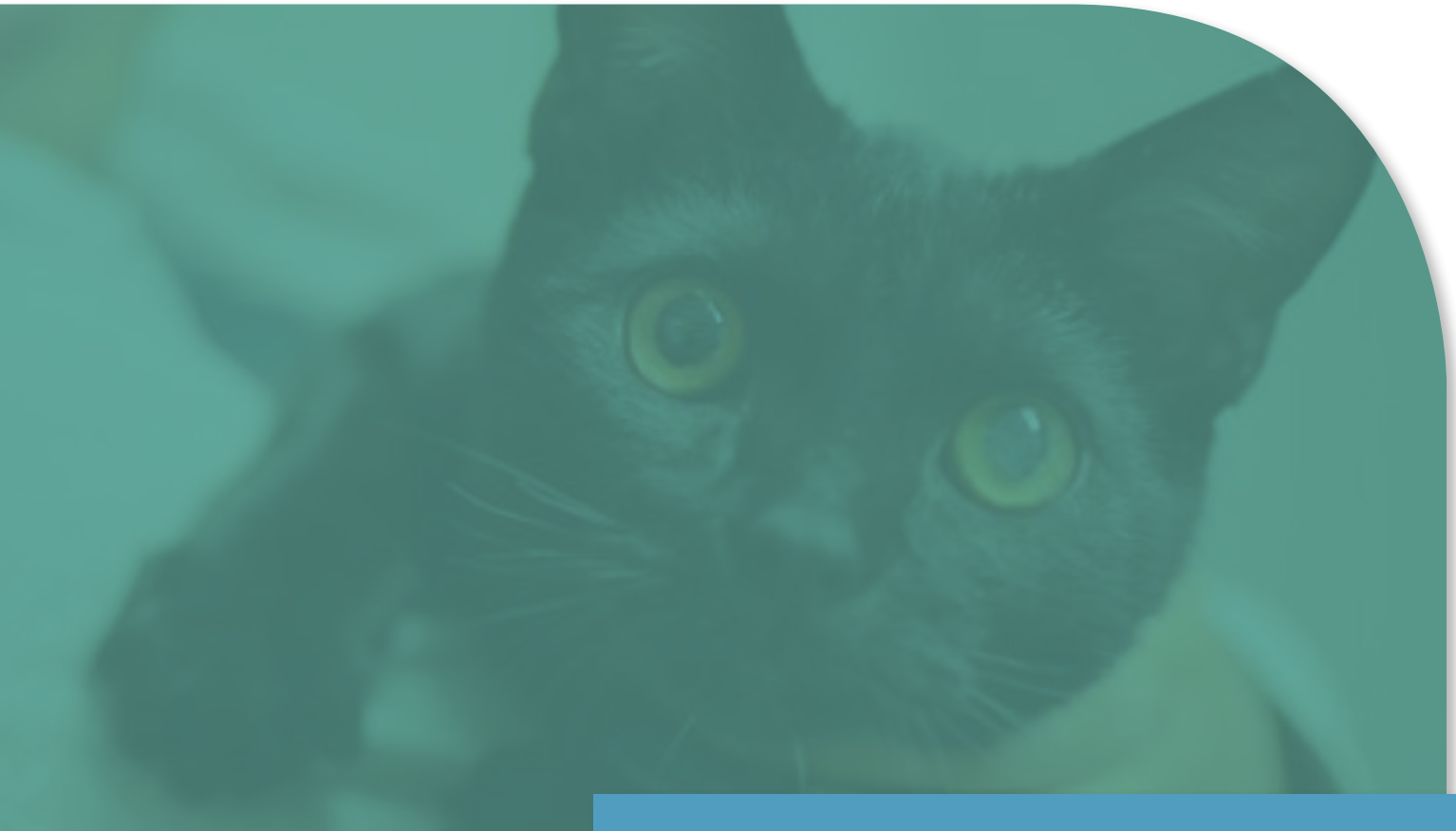


**ANIMAL  
WELFARE  
LEAGUE <sup>OF</sup>  
ARLINGTON**

**ALL IN FOR ANIMALS**

# **STRATEGIC PLAN**



**FISCAL YEARS 2020 - 2022**

# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

On June 7, 2019, the Animal Welfare League of Arlington celebrated our 75th anniversary, making us the oldest animal welfare organization in Northern Virginia.

As you can imagine, the world of animal welfare has changed dramatically in Arlington County since our inception in 1944, and we're now seeing the results of 75 years of hard work and dedication to the welfare of animals. Robust spay/neuter policies and an effective community cat program decreased the amount of animals entering the shelter; strong animal protection laws reduce stray animals while setting standards for pet ownership; more and more people own pets; and adopting from a shelter is becoming increasingly popular. Also, community members, County leadership, and private businesses are eager to support the shelter's honest, welcoming, and mission-driven approach to animal welfare.

We're seeing many of these same trends in other communities, too.

However, despite the success in Arlington County and similar jurisdictions, too often the level of animal welfare depends on where one lives. Communities across the country don't have access to the same support and are still struggling with the problems we've addressed over the past 75 years. Today, we're at a critical juncture in animal welfare: growing inequality between jurisdictions like ours and those with fewer resources is forcing difficult decisions about ways to best serve our community while also helping those in need just outside our backyard.

Given this backdrop, the League recognized the need for thoughtful and strategic planning and felt the time was right to undertake a comprehensive plan for our future.

This is only the start. We recognize the future is full of uncertainties, but we're confident this plan will guide us through an animal welfare landscape that is dramatically changing. On behalf of all the staff and Board of the League, we look forward to working with each and every one of you in order to help realize our plan and fulfill our mission.

Sincerely,

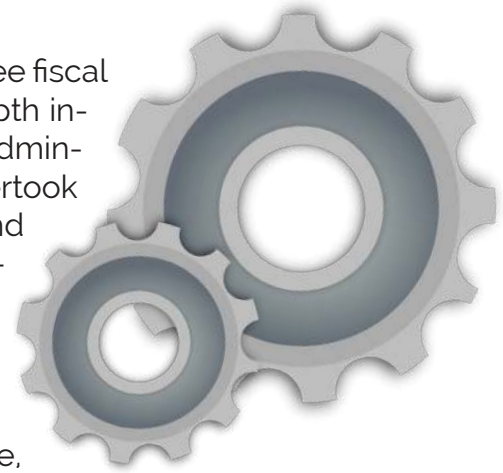


Samuel Wolbert  
President & CEO  
Animal Welfare League of Arlington



# THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

This plan is a road map for the League to follow over the next three fiscal years. The planning process began in January 2019 with in-depth interviews among stakeholders, including individuals in County administration, volunteers, donors, and area business owners. We then undertook a staff-wide internal analysis of strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats, before forming a Strategic Planning Team comprised of representatives from the staff and the Board of Directors. The process was facilitated by our friends at Springboard International.



The plan's primary goal was to stretch the League to think beyond day-to-day operations. Tasks that already occur—for example, improved adoption rates, premier veterinary care, or effective County engagement—are not in the plan because they organically happen as part of our everyday work and will continue to do so. What remains is a set of primary focus areas that will position us to truly make a difference in the changing animal welfare landscape while also establishing the League as a paradigm example of a model shelter.

We're incredibly proud of the end result, which includes the following features:

**Revamped mission and vision statements that better reflect the League's commitment to animals and the people who care for them.**

**Three critical goal categories and five strategic outcomes that will drive operations over the next three years.**

**Updated values and guiding principles to help define our organizational culture.**

We created a timeline of monthly, quarterly, and annual S.M.A.R.T. goals (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timely) to track our progress and ensure successful execution. The plan is also dynamic and fluid, should we need to adjust to whatever new or unforeseen challenges or roadblocks that may arise.

# VISION

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A humane community in which animals and people live together harmoniously.

# MISSION

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Improving the lives of animals and people by providing resources, care, and protection.

# VALUES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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## LEAD COURAGEOUSLY

We strive to be leaders in our field and community knowing that a leader pursues excellence, fosters innovation, and rises to the hardest challenges.

## DO GOOD

Encourage an environment of compassion, respect, kindness, and inclusivity among staff, volunteers, clients, and the community that we serve. Suspend judgment while acknowledging and appreciating the individuality of each person and animal.

## BE HONEST

Recognize the critical role we serve in the community and maintain the public's trust through open accessibility and transparency.

## EMBRACE CHANGE

Remain open-minded and adaptable to the changing landscape. We learn from our failures and work every day to improve ourselves and the organization.

## WORK TOGETHER

Support each other by creating a positive, mission-driven, and team-centered culture. Above all, have fun and laugh.





# CRITICAL GOAL CATEGORIES

## 1

### OPTIMIZE PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

#### > MAXIMIZE AND EXPAND PROGRAMS AND PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

##### o Outcomes:

- Assist 500 pet owners with behavior challenges.
- Create a "Peticaid" program for residents of Arlington County whose pets are in need of non-emergency veterinary assistance.
- Establish an apprenticeship and in-house training program for rescues and shelters hosting 16 apprenticeships for Animal Control, Animal Care, Medical, and Behavior.
- Create a Wildlife Support Program that includes subsidizing rehabbing cost for Arlington-based rehabbers, providing supportive supplies to rehabbers who receive wildlife from Arlington, furthering our wildlife driver network by fifteen new drivers, and providing public educational opportunities.

#### > DRIVE ORGANIZATIONAL GROWTH

##### o Outcomes:

- Create a dedicated area for wildlife.
- Create a dog isolation area.
- Undertake a feasibility study to investigate the potential to enlarge our education room.



# CRITICAL GOAL CATEGORIES

## 2

### CULTIVATE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

#### > OPTIMIZE COMMUNICATION, INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL

##### o Outcomes:

- Create a centralized database for Standard Operating Procedures and re-view key elements annually.
- Establish a consistent method for everyday (situational) messaging and signage.

#### > INSPIRE RESPECTFUL AND TEAM-CENTERED WORK ENVIRONMENT

##### o Outcomes:

- Establish two new programs that support staff employability.
- Develop and execute an ongoing leadership development plan for each individual in a supervisory role.

## 3

### AUGMENT FUND DEVELOPMENT

#### > PROVIDE RELIABLE ANNUAL INCOME BY MEANS OF ENDOWMENT

##### o Outcomes:

- Create Board-designated quasi-endowment fund.
- Increase fund by \$250,000/year for the next three years.



# ATTACHMENT A: POSITION STATEMENTS

## OPTIMIZE PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

### o **Maximize & Expand Programs and Public Assistance**

- **Behavior** - We recognize the importance of keeping pets in homes where they are loved. Animals surrendered with behavior problems can remain with families if provided proper resources and information. Our goal is to provide assistance to people who need help managing their pets' behavior problems. To that end, we intend to expand our behavior training program so that our community and adopters can identify and work through behavior issues, if possible, rather than surrender an animal to the shelter.
- **"Peticaid"** - We believe that financial challenges should not cause a beloved pet to be relinquished. We currently offer emergency vet-assistance to fund veterinary care for pet owners who cannot afford up-front veterinary costs during a pet emergency. This program is incredibly successful at saving lives and keeping pets in homes. In 2018 alone, the League approved nearly \$22,000 dollars for 46 local pets to receive life-saving care. Despite the program's success, we have identified a growing need going unfulfilled. Veterinary care can be expensive and we know many pet owners struggle to manage chronic, life-long conditions that can negatively affect the pets' quality of life. To meet this need, the League will develop a "Peticaid" program for qualified residents of Arlington County whose pets are experiencing non-emergency health conditions.
- **Apprenticeships** - The League is fortunate to have the support of Arlington County residents and leadership, and we recognize many partner shelters and animal control agencies don't have access to the same resources. We believe that collaboration is the key to improve lifesaving, and by coming together we can share strategies, best practices, and innovative programs that other rescues, agencies, or shelters can then implement in their own jurisdictions. Therefore, we will help our partner shelters by developing in-house training and apprenticeship opportunities for any organization that is looking to improve their community's lifesaving capacity.
- **Wildlife** - Today, there are fewer and fewer wildlife rehabbers, yet there are more and more human-wildlife conflicts as development in Arlington continues to encroach upon natural habitat. We will need to be more proactive in order to assist Arlington's abundant wildlife population and to uphold the values of a model humane community. To do so, we will create a Wildlife Support Program to address the critical need for more wildlife rehabbers while also providing educational opportunities so that the community can learn to live in harmony with wildlife.

### o **Drive Organizational Growth**

- We know that maintaining an elite shelter is critical to saving animal lives and we are proud of our history of continual shelter improvements and renovations. Within the past decade we've undertaken major renovations, including a new dog intake building, updated cat condos and dog kennels, and, most recently, an improved lobby/adoption area. In order to stay current with lifesaving best practices, we are committed to creating a dedicated dog isolation space and an improved enclosure for wildlife. Additionally, we will undertake a feasibility study to investigate the potential to enlarge our education room. Each of these improvements will allow us to best serve the needs of our community and our changing animal population.



# ATTACHMENT A: POSITION STATEMENTS

## CULTIVATE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- **Optimize Communication (Internal and External) & Inspire Respectful and Team-Centered Work Environment**
  - We know that an organization is only as strong as its personnel, and for the League to continue growing we must invest in our staff and volunteers. Our goal is to not only be an exemplary animal shelter, but also to employ and retain an outstanding workforce, made up of staff and volunteers who are eager, excited about their work, and expertly trained to handle anything that comes their way. In order to accomplish this, we will create a centralized database for all standard operating procedures with the goal of reviewing key elements annually. Additionally, we will establish new programs that support staff employability while also developing and formalizing an ongoing leadership development plan for each individual in a supervisory role.

## AUGMENT FUND DEVELOPMENT

- **Provide Reliable Annual Income by Means of Endowment**
  - Strong fiscal health is critical to any organization. In order to continue growing, the League will create a board-designated quasi-endowment fund as a means to solidify the financial health of the organization. The purpose of the endowment will be to further cement the League's financial strength and organizational perpetuity.

