



Thriving Together

A Strategic Vision for Pets, People and Progress

2025 – 2029

Message from the Board Chair and CEO

MARCH 17, 2025

Over a century ago, Rosetta Graydon sparked a movement in our community. She didn't just dream of a safe haven for animals in need—she built it. In 1907, she established what would become the **Edmonton Humane Society (EHS)**. Her vision for compassion, advocacy and education lives on today, inspiring everything we do.

Under Rosetta's leadership, EHS became more than a shelter; it became a champion for animals at a time when they had none. She advocated for humane treatment, rallied the community, and set a precedent that still guides us: that every animal deserves care, dignity and love.

Today, thanks to our remarkable team, volunteers and supporters, we've raised the bar on what animal care means. From best-in-class shelter medicine to unwavering operational

excellence, we've accomplished so much together. But the reality is this: the demand for animal sheltering and care continues to outpace capacity.

We've realized something important—this isn't a problem we can solve alone or within our walls. It's time to think bigger.

Our vision is for a community **where people and pets thrive, together**. To achieve it, we're extending our leadership beyond EHS, collaborating with others to drive system-wide change. This is about people as much as pets. It's about scaling our impact by building partnerships, addressing root causes, and strengthening the human-animal bond. At the same time, we remain steadfast in our commitment to providing exceptional sheltering and adoption services—the heart of what we do.



ALLISON RADFORD (LEFT)
LIZA SUNLEY (BELOW)



This strategic plan will guide us over the next five years, helping us take meaningful steps toward realizing our vision and ensuring we're prepared for what's to come.

The road ahead is challenging, but the possibilities are extraordinary. Together, with your support, we're poised to make an even greater difference—for the animals, for the people who love them, and for our community.

Thank you for being part of this journey.

Allison Radford
Chair, Board of Directors

Liza Sunley
CEO

Our Process and Realities

Our Process

Developed through a thoughtful process starting in fall 2023, our 2025-2029 strategy draws on research, peer organizations and extensive engagement with both stakeholders and the general public. We surveyed over 1,300 people to ensure this strategy reflects the needs and aspirations of the community EHS serves, setting a bold vision for the future of animals and their human companions.

Our Realities

EHS has built a strong foundation during our previous 2020-2024 strategic plan through operational improvements, nurturing an animal welfare-focused culture, and preparing for growth. This groundwork positions us to address the unprecedented challenges facing the animal welfare system, including the rising number of animals in need driven by economic hardships, lack of pet-inclusive housing and other systemic issues.

To meet these increasing pressures, EHS will embrace innovative approaches and work alongside community partners to address gaps and amplify our collective impact. With an engaged workforce, strong brand recognition and untapped opportunities to deepen connections, EHS is well-positioned to advance animal welfare and serve our community in new and even more meaningful ways.



Our Mission

Enrich the lives of people and companion animals through sheltering animals in need, supporting pet guardians, engaging with our community and inspiring compassion.



Our mission describes our core purpose—the reason we exist.



Every day, we work to strengthen the bond between people and their companion animals. Whether creating new, lasting bonds through adoption, supporting existing relationships with programs and services, or keeping families together by providing temporary shelter and other supports, we ensure the connection at both ends of the leash remains strong.

Our Vision

People and pets thriving, together.



Our vision for the future is hopeful and inspiring.



Building on our community's love for animals and our ability to unite efforts, we'll set a new standard of care and compassion. For us, the future goes beyond animal sheltering and rehoming. It's about transforming the conversation and inspiring a community where pets have lives truly worth living, are valued as family, and have the supports they need to stay with the people who love them.

Our ambition for the future embraces a broad view of animal welfare. We aim to address issues comprehensively—moving beyond isolated programs and interventions like adoptions or our pet food bank—to strategically influence the deeper factors that shape the well-being of pets in our community.

Our Values

EHS embodies our values every day and in everything we do. These values guide our decisions, large and small.

What we value

What it means

Compassion

We care about how others feel—both animals and people.

Trust

We cultivate confidence through integrity and transparency.

Improvement

We continually raise the bar.

Results

We create measurable impact.

Inclusivity

We want everyone to feel welcome, valued and respected.

Teamwork

We're better together.

Our View on Animal Welfare

For us, animal welfare is an animal's quality of life as determined by their physical and mental state in their environment.

We assess animal welfare using the **Five Domains**, an evolution of the Five Freedoms, which consider both negative and positive experiences of animals from both physical and functional factors, affecting their mental state and welfare. The five domains are:

1. **Nutrition**
2. **Physical Environment**
3. **Health**
4. **Behavioural Interactions**
5. **Mental State**

In a world where we want animals to not only survive, but thrive, it is important that we use an animal welfare model that emphasizes and encourages positive experiences for animals rather than only avoiding negative ones.



| SHELTER

Kelvin

Finds Hope & Healing in Foster



Kelvin arrived at EHS in rough shape. The five-year-old cat had painful wounds from severe ear mites and needed urgent medical care, including dental surgery. He was also diagnosed with Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV), which weakens the immune system and requires extra care.

To help him heal, Kelvin was placed in foster care with Sandra, who had experience caring for other medical cases, including an FIV-positive cat of her own. **“When a new foster arrives, I sleep in the same room with them to try to put them at ease,”** she explains.

As Kelvin recovered and his personality blossomed, Sandra realized she couldn't part with him. **“This guy had wormed himself into my heart and my house,”** she says. And so Kelvin's stay became permanent.

Through compassionate sheltering and foster care, EHS gives animals like Kelvin a chance to heal, thrive and find the loving homes they deserve.

Our Strategy



Our 2025-29 strategic plan focuses on **five key pillars and objectives**:

Prevent

Eliminate animal homelessness, neglect and cruelty in the community by addressing root causes.

Shelter

Provide the best possible care for companion animals in need of sheltering and adoption.

Inspire

Empower our community to elevate animal welfare.

Grow

Cultivate enduring support and resources to advance our mission.



Engage

Foster a positive culture and environment that makes us a leading choice for staff and volunteers.

| STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1

Prevent

Eliminate animal homelessness, neglect and cruelty in the community by addressing root causes.

Why It Matters

Shelters and humane societies are at capacity and as our population increases, so too will the need for sheltering. Unless we turn off the taps and prevent animals from needing shelter, this need will continue to grow. By providing resources and support, we can make it easier for pet guardians to access the information and assistance they need—keeping more pets in homes where they are loved.

What Success Will Look Like

More pets and pet guardians supported in the community.

Goals and Strategies

1. **Expand and implement low-barrier programs that support and preserve the human-animal bond.**
 - Develop a strategy for improving access to care for pets.
 - Enhance our hub for the collection and provision of pet supplies.
 - Expand programs that assist families with managing the behaviour concerns of their dogs and cats.
 - Expand programs that assist with lost pet reunification.
 - Offer expanded animal care support for pet guardians.

2. **Support the coordinated provision of animal welfare information and supplies to the public.**
 - Improve the resources and access to information available to pet guardians in our community.

3. **Develop strategies to ensure readiness for emergencies.**
 - Develop a comprehensive operational disaster and emergency readiness plan.
 - Develop a continuity plan for EHS services in case of disaster or emergency.

| STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2

Shelter

Provide the best possible care for companion animals in need of sheltering and adoption.

Why It Matters

There will always be a need for some level of sheltering and rehoming for the most vulnerable or homeless animals. They deserve the very best care so they can live happy, healthy lives with new families.

What Success Will Look Like

Animals stay in shelter the right amount of time based on their behavioural and medical condition on admission.

Goals and Strategies

1. Use and contribute to best evidence in animal sheltering and adoptions.

- Ensure EHS procedures meet or exceed best practice guidelines.
- Contribute to best and promising practices in the field of animal sheltering.
- Position staff for success in animal sheltering.

2. Ensure EHS property facilitates excellence in animal sheltering.

- Develop a plan to ensure the EHS facility meets current and future anticipated operational needs.
- Improve the function of the EHS facility.



| STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3

Inspire

Empower our community to elevate animal welfare.

Why It Matters

Creating a community where pets and people thrive together requires societal change. We need to ensure that pets and their guardians are always considered, and that the conversation around companion animals is elevated to a systems-level. This will take vision, collaboration and a commitment to the next generation—encouraging them to grow up with compassion for animals and a strong sense of responsibility for their care.

What Success Will Look Like

Decision-makers are aware of EHS and animal welfare issues and take that into account when making decisions.

Children and youth learn about animal welfare.

Goals and Strategies

1. Work collaboratively with local partners in animal welfare.

- Implement a coalition building strategy to establish and nurture collaborative partnerships and relationships with other organizations to drive impactful, system-level changes.
- Engage with local partners on specific projects.

2. Work with decision-makers to ensure policies that impact pets and pet guardians take their well-being into account.

- Build and enhance relationships with decision-makers.
- Develop an advocacy strategy to influence public policy and legislation that benefits animal welfare.

3. Inspire compassion and understanding about animals in our youth.

- Create and implement new humane education programs.
- Increase engagement in humane education programs.

| INSPIRE

Isabella

Nurturing a Passion for Animals



When 12-year-old Isabella first attended an EHS education camp, she already loved animals, but she left with an even deeper understanding of them. **“I learned about animal body language, which has taught me to respect animals way better than I already did,”** she shares.

Through camps, the Pet-Sitters Course and volunteering with her family, Isabella has grown into a passionate advocate for animal welfare. **“I would like to become a veterinary doctor or marine biologist to help animals,”** she says.

One of the highlights of EHS’ programs for her has been the meaningful connections she’s made, both with people and animals.

By empowering the next generation to care for and protect animals, EHS is shaping the future of animal welfare—one inspired heart at a time.

| STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4

Grow

Cultivate enduring support and resources to advance our mission.

Why It Matters

Through the generosity of supporters, donors and partners, we provide new chances to companion animals, support pet guardians and inspire compassion for animals in our community. We cannot do this important work without help.

What Success Will Look Like

Increased cash contribution generated from fundraising and social enterprise activities.



Goals and Strategies

1. Grow and sustain financial resources through philanthropic giving to support EHS priorities, take projects and programs to the next level and provide value to the supporter.

- Grow and deepen individual donor relationships.
- Empower our community to undertake third-party fundraising on our behalf.
- Create meaningful, lasting corporate and foundation partnerships.
- Engage in capital campaign preparation.

2. Grow and sustain financial resources through social enterprise.

- Enhance and align the EHS social enterprise model to achieve greater impact.

| STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5

Engage

Foster a positive culture and environment that makes us a leading choice for staff and volunteers.

Why It Matters

We need an engaged, skilled team of staff and volunteers to deliver high-quality programs and services.

What Success Will Look Like

Staff and volunteers are committed to EHS.

Goals and Strategies

1. Create a fulfilling experience for our people.

- Show recognition for our team's success and contributions.
- Invest in career and professional development for staff and volunteers.
- Protect and enhance our team's well-being.
- Create an engaging and attractive work atmosphere.





For updates on our journey, visit
edmontonhumanesociety.com/plan