



Northern Tier Shelter Initiative Innovative Web Series

Collaboration with the people and communities connected to animals is fundamental to positive outcomes. As animal welfare deepens its commitment to this principle, outreach efforts and work with communities is changing for the better. Collaboration is especially important between animal-welfare agencies and Indigenous, Native American and/or Alaska Native communities. If your agency is approaching this work or is looking to refresh your efforts, the following steps might be helpful as you prepare to work collaboratively with communities towards positive outcomes for both pets and people.

Build cultural and historical awareness

- ✓ While recognizing that love toward and desire for our pets to live safe, healthy, full lives can be a universal experience, we also need to respect that each community is distinct, and each community member is unique in their experiences and what they may want or can provide for their pets.
- ✓ Visit the community's website to find contacts for the Tribal Government; an overview of existing programs and services; details on Tribal-owned businesses and the central economy; plus, many other historical and cultural resources.
- ✓ Talk to community leaders transparently about your work and goals, also asking them about their views, interests and resources.
- ✓ If appropriate, ask for the opportunity to hear directly from community members prior to launching outreach work.
- ✓ Once your agency has engaged with the community, present the plans at an appropriate venue to community members, demonstrating that you have adapted your work to specific questions and comments from the community.
- ✓ For work in Alaska, it's important to understand how the remoteness, geography, and the Alaska Native Regional Corporation system impacts the resources and services available to Alaska Natives.
- ✓ Consider the National Indian Health Board free on-line Working with Tribes Training that provides an overview of the historical impact of colonization, including the issue of historical trauma.

Work alongside the community and establish protocols of engagement

- ✓ As the work begins, include action steps to build relationships with community decision-makers and individuals interested in community engagement.
- ✓ Check that your proposed outreach plan provides opportunities to work with the community to co-create a system that works for them and not one directed at them.
- ✓ It's important to have open and transparent communication that includes straight-forward engagement about your agency's questions and what you can and cannot provide as part of the outreach program.
- ✓ Create benchmarks that focus on growing the prospect of developing a sustainable impact, so when your organization leaves, the work can continue and the potential for new or stronger infrastructure in people, equipment, buildings, funding, can continue.
- ✓ Review First Nations Development Institute's Changing the Narrative About Native Americans: A Guide for Allies
- ✓ Be sure to discuss your proposed communication plans with the community to get input and permission to share stories, data and images, and a shared understanding on how information about the program can be used to create awareness and generate financial support.
- ✓ Check out the HSUS Pets for Life resources. This program is driven by social justice and guided by the philosophy that a deep connection with pets transcends socio-economic, racial, and geographic boundaries.