



CENTER FOR
THE ENVIRONMENT
& WELFARE

Charity Crisis

How the Humane Society of the United States
Puts Executives Ahead of Struggling Pet Shelters



Background

The Humane Society of the United States is one of America's largest animal organizations. Overall, the group had a budget of \$178 million in 2023.

But just how much of that money actually made it to pet shelters?

Despite its name, the Humane Society of the United States is not actually affiliated with local humane societies in communities across America (or any other pet shelter, for that matter).

In 2023, the Humane Society of the United States gave just \$767,903 to local pet shelters via financial grants, which is less than half of a percentage point of the organization's overall budget. It's also far less than the \$5 million HSUS spent on its executive's compensation. Pet shelters in 29 states were totally ignored by HSUS's distribution of financial grants.

These numbers are part of a disturbing trend. Over the past three years, the money granted to local pet shelters by the Humane Society of the United States has declined by 53%. In 2021, the group granted \$1.6 million to local pet shelters, compared to just \$767,903 in 2023. This decline is in spite of the organization's overall budget increasing by about \$40 million – a 29% increase.

Compensation to HSUS's executives also grew by 24% between 2021 and 2023. In fact, the current President and CEO of HSUS received \$649,672 in compensation in 2023 – almost as much as the organization gave to local pet shelters that year.

Fast Fact: Financial grants to local pet shelters by the Humane Society of the United States have declined by 53% since 2021.

This dynamic creates real problems for abandoned pets in our communities. Polling shows that 80% of the public mistakenly believes that the Humane Society of the United States is affiliated with local humane organizations across the country. There is no affiliation.

Many Americans mistakenly give money to the Humane Society of the United States with the assumption that it will be sent to their local humane society. This dynamic lures resources out of struggling local pet shelters and into the national Humane Society, which uses donations for its overhead expenses and executives – or simply stashes the money offshore.

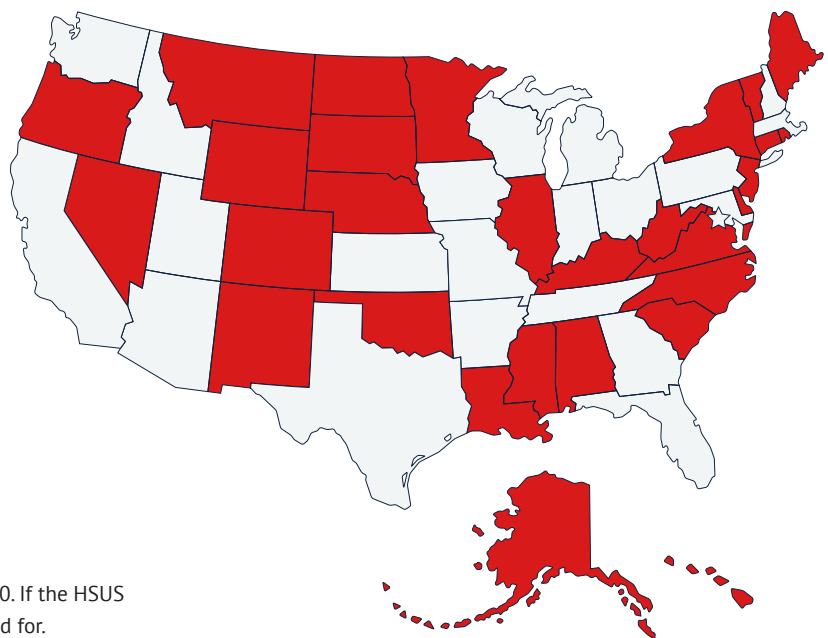
Where Does the Humane Society of the United States Actually Spend its Money?



States Without Financial Contributions to Pet Shelters from HSUS

States that received no financial grants from HSUS: AL, AK, CO, CT, DE, HI, IL, KY, LA, ME, MN, MS, MT, NE, NV, NJ, NM, NY, NC, ND, OK, OR, RI, SC, SD, VT, VA, WV, WY

\$0 in financial grants to pet shelters



*Nonprofits are not required to disclose grants under \$5,000. If the HSUS did not report grants below that size, they are not accounted for.

The Shelter Crisis is Real

The Humane Society of the United States's shrinking financial grants to local pet shelters comes at a time of brutal overcrowding for many pet shelters.

“When I first started 9 years ago, we always had open spaces in our shelter. Now we fill spaces within about 90 seconds... Saying ‘no’ to an animal in need is one of the hardest things in the world, but when there is physically no place to put them, you have to.”

NATALIE THOMSON Chief Communications Officer, Stray Rescue of St. Louis (July 31, 2024)

“With kennels full, there is simply no room to help those in need. At this time, DCHS is unable to help in an emergency. This leaves us unable to fulfill our mission and potentially leaves hundreds of animals without any [resources].”

WISCONSIN'S DODGE COUNTY HUMANE SOCIETY (DCHS) (July 10, 2024)

“The crisis is worse than ever... L.A. city shelters are still absolutely deplorable. They are overcrowded and the dogs are suffering. There are two or three dogs in a kennel meant for one. There are crates lining the hallways.”

SHIRA SCOTT ASTROF CEO, The Animal Rescue Mission (May 21, 2024)

“I've been doing this for 10 years and I have never seen so many puppies in shelters in Utah... and we have been getting slammed by microchipped dogs and people who don't want them back.”

STACEY NIXON South Ogden City Animal Control (April 12, 2024)

Appendix A: Financial Grants by the Humane Society of the United States Given to Local Pet Shelters in 2023

State	Number of Financial Grants	Value of Financial Grants	% of HSUS Budget
ALABAMA	0	\$0	0%
ALASKA	0	\$0	0%
ARIZONA	1	\$15,000	0.01%
<i>High Desert Humane Society</i>		\$15,000	
ARKANSAS	1	\$15,000	0.01%
<i>The Good Shepherd Humane Society</i>		\$15,000	
CALIFORNIA	1	\$50,000	0.03%
<i>Stray Cat Alliance</i>		\$50,000	
COLORADO	0	\$0	0%
CONNECTICUT	0	\$0	0%
DELAWARE	0	\$0	0%
FLORIDA	1	\$1,800	0%
<i>Humane Society of North Central Florida</i>		\$1,800	
GEORGIA	1	\$15,000	0.01%
<i>The Good Mews Animal Foundation</i>		\$15,000	
HAWAII	0	\$0	0%
IDAHO	3	\$200,000	0.11%
<i>Better Together Animal Alliance</i>		\$50,000	
<i>Animal Shelter of Wood River Valley</i>		\$50,000	
<i>Idaho Humane Society</i>		\$100,000	
ILLINOIS	0	\$0	0%
INDIANA	4	\$28,000	0.02%
<i>Friends of Indianapolis Animal Care and Control Foundation</i>		\$5,000	
<i>Humane Fort Wayne Pet Food Pantry</i>		\$500	
<i>Humane Society of Sullivan County</i>		\$7,500	
<i>Vanderburgh Humane Society</i>		\$15,000	
IOWA	1	\$15,000	0.01%
<i>Animal Rescue League of Iowa</i>		\$15,000	
KANSAS	1	\$500	0%
<i>Golden Belt Humane and Animal Welfare Society</i>		\$500	
KENTUCKY	0	\$0	0%
LOUISIANA	0	\$0	0%
MARYLAND	1	\$995	0%
<i>Maryland SPCA</i>		\$995	0%

State	Number of Financial Grants	Value of Financial Grants	% of HSUS Budget
MASSACHUSETTS	1	\$7,400	0%
<i>Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals</i>		<i>\$7,400</i>	
MAINE	0	\$0	0%
MICHIGAN	1	\$2,991	0%
<i>Michigan Humane Society</i>		<i>\$2,991</i>	
MINNESOTA	0	\$0	0%
MISSISSIPPI	0	\$0	0%
MISSOURI	2	\$60,750	0.03%
<i>Kansas City Pet Project</i>		<i>\$60,000</i>	
<i>Old Drum Animal Rescue</i>		<i>\$750</i>	
MONTANA	0	\$0	0%
NEBRASKA	0	\$0	0%
NEVADA	0	\$0	0%
NEW HAMPSHIRE	1	\$1,000	0%
<i>Monadnock Humane Society</i>		<i>\$1,000</i>	
NEW JERSEY	0	\$0	0%
NEW MEXICO	0	\$0	0%
NEW YORK	0	\$0	0%
NORTH CAROLINA	0	\$0	0%
NORTH DAKOTA	0	\$0	0%
OHIO	1	\$1,000	0%
<i>Cincinnati Animal CARE</i>		<i>\$1,000</i>	
OKLAHOMA	0	\$0	0%
OREGON	0	\$0	0%
PENNSYLVANIA	1	\$15,000	0.03%
<i>Animal Care and Control Team</i>		<i>\$15,000</i>	
RHODE ISLAND	0	\$0	0%
SOUTH CAROLINA	0	\$0	0%
SOUTH DAKOTA	0	\$0	0%
TENNESSEE	1	\$15,000	0.01%
<i>Humane Educational Society of Chattanooga</i>		<i>\$15,000</i>	
TEXAS	2	\$18,667	0.01%
<i>Austin Pets Alive</i>		<i>\$3,667</i>	
<i>Houston Humane Society</i>		<i>\$15,000</i>	
UTAH	1	\$314	0%
<i>Ruff Haven</i>		<i>\$314</i>	
VERMONT	0	\$0	0%

State	Number of Financial Grants	Value of Financial Grants	% of HSUS Budget
VIRGINIA	0	\$0	0%
WASHINGTON	2	\$225,495	0.12%
<i>Auburn Valley Humane Society</i>		<i>\$100,495</i>	
<i>Seattle Humane</i>		<i>\$125,000</i>	
WEST VIRGINIA	0	\$0	0%
WISCONSIN	1	\$60,000	0.03%
<i>Wisconsin Humane Society</i>		<i>\$60,000</i>	
WYOMING	0	\$0	0%
WASHINGTON, DC	1	\$17,991	0.01%
<i>Humane Rescue Alliance</i>		<i>\$17,991</i>	

Methodology

Nonprofits are required to annually file a Form 990, which details the organization’s spending. Likewise, the Humane Society of the United States publishes annual audited financial statements conducted by outside groups.

The Form 990s and the audited financial statements for 2023 (the most recent available documents from the Humane Society of the United States) were analyzed, with a particular focus on the executive salaries, expenses, and grants. The group lists individual grants made to other organizations on its tax returns. Grant recipients were researched to determine if they were, in fact, a pet shelter. Nonprofits are not required to disclose grants under \$5,000. If the Humane Society decided not to disclose a grant of this nature then it has not been included in this analysis.

For the purpose of this study, pet shelters are defined as organizations that have a facility for housing abandoned pet animals. This includes both local animal welfare groups that run shelters, as well as local governmental animal services departments that run shelters, and does not include animal welfare organizations without physical shelters, and local governmental organizations that give no indication of running a shelter. Pets are cats and dogs, and do not include livestock or horses.

Grants were only counted if they were actual donations of financial assistance. Previously, the Humane Society donated pet food to shelters, but the organization notes that it merely “distributed” the food; Chewy made the actual donation of food. Such grants were not counted.