

Humane Society of West Alabama Backgrounder

History

Founded in 1971, the Humane Society of West Alabama (HSWA) has served as a vital no-kill, all-volunteer animal rescue and adoption organization in the Tuscaloosa area. With more than five decades of service, HSWA has rescued and rehomed thousands of dogs and cats, offering a compassionate alternative to euthanasia-based shelters. Since 2003, the organization has facilitated over 2,000 cat adoptions and more than 1,600 dog adoptions since 2005.

Originally operating from multiple small locations, HSWA is now undergoing its largest transformation yet. In October 2025, HSWA will open a state-of-the-art 13-acre campus in Cottondale. The new facility consolidates its operations into a centralized Animal Adoption Center, featuring upgraded amenities for animals, volunteers, and potential adopters. This expansion is part of the organization's ambitious "Unleash the Possibilities" campaign, which aims to better serve a growing and transient population while addressing persistent overcrowding and animal abandonment.

The expansion of HSWA comes in response to significant animal welfare challenges in Alabama and the Tuscaloosa area.

- According to shelter data, more than 15,000 animals were euthanized in Alabama in 2022.
- In Tuscaloosa County, euthanasia rates at the Tuscaloosa Metro Animal Shelter have dropped from 1,931 in 2016 to 340 in 2022, in part to strong partnerships with organizations like HSWA.

- As a college town, Tuscaloosa sees a high rate of pet abandonment, especially during seasonal campus transitions.
- Local shelters continue to face chronic overcrowding and underfunding, increasing the need for reliable, no-kill rescue alternatives.

Leadership Team

HSWA's new facility directly addresses these issues by expanding its capacity to house up to 80 cats and 22 dogs in humane, enriching environments that promote well-being and readiness for adoption. HSWA is governed by a Board of Directors and supported by a wide network of volunteers. At the helm is Tina Miller, board chair, who has championed the organization's latest campaign and led efforts to secure community support for the expansion. Her leadership has helped shape the vision for a more centralized and sustainable future for HSWA. The organization's day-to-day operations are coordinated by a dedicated volunteer staff, reflecting the all-volunteer nature of the group.

Mission

The Humane Society of West Alabama is committed to promoting the humane treatment of animals through rescue, rehabilitation, and adoption. HSWA ensures that 100% of donations and funding go directly toward animal care. Their mission is driven by compassion, integrity, and a steadfast commitment to being a responsible and trusted resource in Tuscaloosa's animal welfare community. HSWA believes that every animal deserves a second chance at life in a loving home. Their long-standing dedication to humane care, responsible pet ownership, and community education sets them apart as a leading force in regional animal advocacy.

Current Issues

HSWA is currently in the midst of a multi-year transformation designed to enhance its capacity, efficiency, and visibility. The cornerstone of this initiative is the opening of the new Cat House, a cage-free adoption center for up to 80 cats, and the repurposing of existing structures to serve as a Home for Canine Care, housing up to 22 dogs. The Cottondale campus includes outdoor play yards, cat patios, and visitor-friendly meet-and-greet lobbies that create a more welcoming environment for both animals and potential adopters. These facilities aim to improve adoption rates and elevate the standard of animal care. In addition to the physical expansion, HSWA recently hosted its Annual 5K Run/Walk at Cardinal Park, drawing community support and media attention. These events play a crucial role in raising funds, educating the public, and promoting adoption. The “Unleash the Possibilities” campaign has a fundraising goal of \$3.38 million. The Tuscaloosa community believes in the importance of HSWA’s mission.

For more information or to schedule interviews or a tour of the new campus, please contact:

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