

STATE OF NEW YORK

8375

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

May 13, 2025

Introduced by M. of A. ROSENTHAL -- read once and referred to the
Committee on Social Services

AN ACT to amend the social services law, in relation to establishing a
statewide co-shelter toolkit

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assem-
bly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. Legislative findings and intent. The legislature hereby
2 finds there is a statewide need for sheltered housing that accommodates
3 companion animals for victims of domestic violence and people experienc-
4 ing homelessness. Victims of domestic violence historically remain in
5 abusive situations to curtail abuse against their companion animal,
6 placing an additional burden on individuals already in a dangerous and
7 taxing situation. Results from a survey conducted by the Urban Resource
8 Institute yielded that 48% of respondents were fearful of abusers harm-
9 ing their companion animals and 50% indicated they would not seek shel-
10 ter for themselves if their companion animal could not be accommodated.
11 While housing providers may currently impose no-pet policies for legiti-
12 mate concerns related to health, safety and cost there are successful
13 models across the nation that can be replicated. It is thereby the
14 intent of the legislature to produce a co-shelter toolkit to assist
15 housing providers in creating, implementing and sustaining co-sheltering
16 models to fill this critical gap and service those in need in New York
17 state.

18 § 2. The social services law is amended by adding a new section 459-bb
19 to read as follows:

20 § 459-bb. Statewide co-shelter toolkit. 1. The office of temporary and
21 disability assistance, in consultation with the office for the
22 prevention of domestic violence, shall establish a comprehensive toolkit
23 inclusive of best practices, resources, case studies and other informa-
24 tion deemed helpful to inform and encourage the implementation and
25 sustenance of co-shelter models. Such toolkit shall support new and

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 existing efforts by housing providers, organizations and municipalities
2 to reduce existing sheltered housing barriers for victims of domestic
3 violence and people experiencing homelessness with companion animals.

4 2. For the purposes of this section, co-sheltering shall mean housing
5 people and companion animals together.

6 3. Such co-shelter toolkit shall include, but not be limited to the
7 following components:

8 (a) Introductory information on homelessness and circumstances of
9 domestic violence involving companion animals;

10 (b) Partnership and coalition building with veterinarians, animal
11 welfare organizations, housing providers, law enforcement and any other
12 organization deemed helpful to co-shelter implementation and sustained
13 operations;

14 (c) Systems-level response including, but not limited to, data
15 collection, coordinated entry, outreach, prevention and diversion,
16 interim and permanent housing;

17 (d) Program response including, but not limited to, low barrier pet-
18 inclusive policies, housing design, and animal health and supply needs;

19 (e) Worker response including, but not limited to, training in animal
20 behavior, hygiene, and applicable animal cruelty law;

21 (f) Case studies of existing successful co-shelter programs; and

22 (g) Prospective grant opportunities to reduce financial costs.

23 4. The commissioner of temporary and disability services shall consult
24 applicable housing providers, non-profit organizations, veterinarians
25 and any other agency throughout the development of the guide to provide
26 evidence-based recommendations.

27 5. The co-shelter toolkit shall be made accessible via multiple
28 formats, including but not limited to, posted on the website, social
29 media outlets, and newsletters. The office shall conduct outreach to
30 ensure such toolkit is widely shared.

31 § 3. This act shall take effect on the one hundred twentieth day after
32 it shall have become a law.