

# 2021 BETTER CITIES FOR PETS™ GRANT APPLICATION

## 2. SECTION I: CONTACT & DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

---

### 1. MAYORAL CONTACT INFORMATION

**Mayor's Full Name**

Ryan Sorenson

**City**

Sheboygan

**State**

WI

**Email Address**

ryan.sorenson@sheboyganwi.gov

**City Website Address**

www.sheboyganwi.gov

### 2. PRIMARY CONTACT INFORMATION

(The person that will receive communication regarding the grant application):

**Full Name**

Abby Block

**Office, Department or Organization**

City Planning Department

**Title**

Grant Coordinator

**Email Address**

abby.block@sheboyganwi.gov

**Phone Number**

(920) 459-3378

**3. Affiliated Non-Profit Organization Contact Information (if applicable).** Please complete this section if you are a non-profit organization applying on behalf of a city - or a city working in partnership with a non-profit organization on the proposed project or program.

**Name of Organization**

Humane Society of Sheboygan County

**Primary Contact Name**

Laura Berchem

**Email Address**

laurab@scadopt.org

**Phone Number**

(920) 458-2012

**Website Address**

www.scadopt.org

**Address**

3107 N 20th St

**Suite/Office****City**

Sheboygan

**State**

WI

**Zip**

53083

**4. Please check your city's population size:**

Small City (population smaller than 75,000)

**3. SECTION II: DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED PROJECT OR PROGRAM**

---

**5. Please specify in which Better Cities for Pets pillar category you're applying (Shelters, Homes, Parks or Businesses). You will select only one category.**

***Unsure? Examples may be found below.***

Parks

**6. Are you requesting funding for a new initiative or to enhance/expand an existing project or program in your community?**

New Initiative

**7. Please provide an executive summary of your project/program (1,000 words maximum), in which you should address:**

**The type of project/program for which you're seeking funding;**

**How this project/program ably addresses keeping people and pets together;**

**How this project/program is outstanding and/or innovative;**

**If the funding is for an existing project/program, how the grant will allow you to expand on current efforts in a meaningful way;**

**A general timeline for how the initiative would be executed within 24 months;**

**How this project/program might be replicated in other communities and/or cities.**

"Animals have come to mean so much in our lives. We live in a fragmented and disconnected culture. Politics are ugly, religion is struggling, technology is stressful, and the economy is unfortunate. What's one thing that we have in our lives that we can depend on? A pet loving us unconditionally, every day, very faithfully."

-Jon Katz, American journalist

Formed in August of 2020, the Mayor's Pet-Friendly Task Group is a collaborative effort that brings together the City of Sheboygan, the Humane Society of Sheboygan County (HSSC) and pet loving residents from around the City. Guided by the Mars BETTER CITIES FOR PETS initiative, the group has made significant progress in its mission to build a more pet-friendly Sheboygan. Seeking to build a safe and inclusive community for all people and pets who call the City home, the Task Group works to foster responsible ownership and increase acceptance of pets' important role in the fabric of the community. Using the program's assessment tool to evaluate the City's current strengths and opportunities for improvement, the Task Group identified the Public Parks, Trails and Green Spaces pillar as a priority area of focus.

Located on the beautiful shores of Lake Michigan, the City of Sheboygan is home to an abundance of outdoor spaces which offer diverse, year-round options for people of all ages. However, with just one dog park and a single walking path offering the chance to romp and run, and only a handful of City parks which allow pets on-leash, current recreational opportunities for pets and their owners are severely limited. In addition to insufficient access, significant confusion around where pets are and are not welcome is causing frustration among owners and friction with residents.

Recognizing this as a prime area for improvement, the Task Group set an ambitious course to enhance the availability of pet-friendly spaces. However, budget constraints have posed a significant challenge to accomplishing this goal. Funding through the BETTER CITIES FOR PETS grant program will allow the group to actively and aggressively work to achieve the following objectives:

Select target sites for pet-friendly recommendations:

- Promote and disseminate a community-wide survey to gather resident input
- Work with the Sheboygan Police Department to obtain and analyze data on pet-related incidences and identify relevant trends
- Conduct an audit of the City's outdoor spaces to evaluate size, amenities, challenges, and opportunities
- Rank and prioritize the Task Group's recommendations for at least seven new pet-friendly parks, trails and green spaces

Garner support:

- Work with Neighborhood Associations to enlist resident buy-in
- Promote the benefits of increased recreational options through digital channels, media outlets, and targeted advertising
- Collaborate with the City Attorney to ensure recommendations meet legal requirements
- Communicate with commission members and alderpersons to garner support
- Make recommendations to the Marina, Parks and Forestry Commission and the Common Council

Implement and Educate:

- Install signage at 36 parks to ensure residents can easily determine where pets are and are not allowed
- Install and maintain 15 pet waste stations to encourage responsible clean-up
- Install 2 pet-friendly water fountains
- Add a dedicated page to the City's website with information on parks as well as shelters, pet-friendly businesses and other resources
- Support the HSCC's 3.5-acre dog park, featuring a pond with diving dock, an agility course, and walking path, as well as amenities like dog wash stations and water fountains. This fully-fenced, lighted park is under construction and will be open to the public 24 hours per day/seven days per week, allowing off-leash pets the freedom to run, investigate, socialize and enjoy being a dog. Though a community park in the truest sense of the word, this \$300,000 project has received no municipal funding and is supported solely by private contributions and grants. After securing the items above, remaining funding will support this much-anticipated addition to the City of Sheboygan.

Pet-friendly parks, trails and other outdoor spaces are vital to keeping pets and their people together. And, access to these spaces offers powerful benefits for the entire community- both animals and humans, and pet-owners and the pet-less alike:

- Due to the prevalence of small lot sizes within the City and the increasing number of apartment dwellers, many Sheboygan residents rely on public areas to provide proper exercise, mental stimulation, and social interaction for their animals. Without access to these spaces, pets may never experience life beyond a fence or without a leash. Pets who have their physical, mental and social needs met are less likely to engage in troublesome behaviors, thereby reducing the likelihood of surrender.
- Pet-friendly spaces enhance the physical, mental and emotional health of pet parents as well. For some residents, visits to the dog park or walking trail provide the only physical exercise and fresh air they'll receive. For others, it may be their only opportunity for meaningful human interaction, providing a place to talk, exchange information, and share resources. Mitigating loneliness and isolation has been even more important in the midst of the pandemic, when socializing has been significantly restricted.
- These spaces improve neighborhoods and the City as a whole, lessening congestion on busy streets and sidewalks, and reducing instances of trespassing and other causes of friction between owners and other residents.

Currently home to nearly 23,000 pets, Sheboygan is seeing an influx of new residents who are attracted by our abundant jobs, high quality of life, and relative affordability. Ensuring access to recreational spaces for current and future citizens, both two- and four-legged, will significantly impact the health of the City and its residents. Serving as a scalable example for other communities, this initiative also has the potential to make our region, and the state of Wisconsin, more pet friendly. A BETTER CITIES FOR PETS grant will make this important work possible over the next 18-months, a timeline not otherwise possible, and will bring us closer to our Pet-Friendly City certification and our ultimate goal of building a safe and inclusive community for all.

**8. Please provide a top-line budget projection for how the funds would allocated (and supplemented if applicable) over the grant implementation period (maximum of twenty-four (24) months). Document must be uploaded as a PDF, with a maximum file size of 500 KB.**

[Pet\\_Friendly\\_Project\\_Budget.pdf](#)

**9. Please upload a letter of support from your Mayor's Office (required for submission; must be signed, on city letterhead, and uploaded in PDF format with a maximum file size of 500 KB).**

[Mayors Letter of Support.pdf](#)

**10. Please upload a high-quality png., jpeg., jpg. or pdf. file of your city logo and the logos of any major intended partners. Files may be up to 50 MB each. Additional formats may be requested at any time by Civic Design Center and/or Mars Petcare. By applying for the grant, you give permission for use of the logo(s) should a grant be awarded.**

[Humane Society logo.pdf](#)

[City-of-Sheboygan-logo.pdf](#)

**11. (Optional) Please attach any relevant supplemental material(s) that will enhance your application. Please upload a high-quality png., jpeg., jpg. or pdf. file. You may upload up to three (3) files up to 50 MB each.**

[HSSC Dog Park and New Building Schematics.pdf](#)