HABRI
STRATEGIC PLAN
VISION & MISSION

Vision:

The human-animal bond is universally embraced as an essential element of human wellness.

Mission:

Advance, through science, education and advocacy, the vital role of the human-animal bond in the health and well-being of people, pets, cultures, and communities.
STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES

RESEARCH WITH IMPACT
Play a leading role in the advancement of human-animal interaction science, focusing on research with real-world impact.

MEANINGFUL POLICY INITIATIVES
Drive policy changes that support the human-animal bond and strengthen the role of companion animals in society.

EXPANDING PARTNERSHIPS
Partner with a broad alliance of companies and organizations to advance the human-animal bond as a vital component of personal wellness and public health.

DRIVING THE CONVERSATION
Serve as the leading global information source and educator on the human-animal bond.
CRITICAL FOCUS AREA: MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

One in five Americans will have a diagnosable mental health condition in any given year, and one in twenty-five Americans lives with a serious mental illness. The pandemic, economic dislocation and social upheaval have only deepened this mental health crisis. In the face of these challenges, pets have been front-and-center, supported by strong evidence that they have a positive impact on our mental health. Scientific research has found that human-animal interaction can reduce anxiety, depression, and loneliness, as well as improve our sense of wellbeing. At this crucial moment, HABRI will make mental health a critical area of focus across all programmatic areas, including:

**Research** – Call for and fund more academic and survey research on the benefits of pets for mental health, prioritizing at-risk and vulnerable populations. Support the translation of research into professional tools for incorporating animals in the treatment of mental health.

**Education/Outreach** – Make mental health a key point of entry to develop relationships with human healthcare and mental-health-specific providers and organizations.

**Advocacy** – Leverage the science on pets and mental health to advance policies that support pets and their owners, including the availability of service animals, access to veterinary care, and FSA/HSA legislation.
CRITICAL FOCUS AREA: 
PET-INCLUSIVE HOUSING

The demand for a more pet-friendly society is increasing — where pets are welcomed in classrooms, medical settings, workplaces and, most importantly, where we live. The shortage of pet-friendly rental housing, as well as transitional/emergency housing, is a barrier for pet owners throughout the world. This lack of pet-friendly housing is a leading driver of pet relinquishment, breaking the human-animal bond. Combined with broader economic forces, the housing crisis is only deepening for people and pets everywhere. HABRI will develop persuasive data and advocate for policies that increase pet-inclusive housing, including:

Research – Conduct and call for more directed research on pets and housing that supports both a policy and market-based approach to increasing pet-inclusive housing.

Education/Outreach – Continue to work with key partners to promote pet-inclusive housing, including the expansion of the Pet Inclusive Housing Initiative. Leverage available data on pet-friendly residential policies and use learnings from co-hosting the international workshop on pets and housing to build additional partnerships and drive positive change.

Advocacy – Support legislation with a focus on helping those who are most vulnerable, including Federal legislation: PAWS Act (DV shelters), PUPP Act (homeless shelters), and Pets Belong with Families Act (public housing), and state initiatives such as housing finance authorities’ prioritization of pet-friendly low-income projects.
CRITICAL FOCUS AREA: INTERNATIONAL OUTREACH

We know from research that the human-animal bond is strong and universal across all countries and cultures. Yet, there is no organization at the international level focused solely on advancing the human-animal bond. This provides an opportunity for HABRI to fill this important role. HABRI is already funding international research and has strategic messaging and content that will resonate with international audiences. HABRI will begin to engage in international outreach, including:

**Research** – Continue to support international research projects, including expansion of its human-animal bond survey to additional countries.

**Education/Outreach** – Work with international partners to develop opportunities to present HABRI data before international groups and conferences. Create impactful events and education opportunities that showcase the human-animal bond for key audiences.

**Advocacy** – Use international platforms to support policies that advance the human-animal bond, including improved veterinary care and animal welfare; social isolation and loneliness; pets in housing; and pet-friendly workplaces.
CRITICAL FOCUS AREA: PUBLIC HEALTH

Pet ownership – access to pets and the resources to care for them – is an important but untapped public health strategy. Scientifically documented benefits of the human-animal bond show that pets support better mental health; address significant medical conditions; and support social cohesion among diverse pet owners, strengthening the fabric of society. There is currently no large-scale, government-endorsed initiative to promote pet ownership or to help pet owners care for their pets. The evidence is strong enough that we should elevate engagement with pets to the same level as nutrition, exercise, smoking cessation and other public health priorities. HABRI will work to make this happen, including:

**Research** – Conduct updated economic analysis of healthcare costs savings of pet ownership. Use the data to show stakeholders that pet ownership helps reduce human healthcare spending for employers, health plans and government.

**Education/Outreach** – Develop partnerships with human health companies, organizations and services agencies. Work with the pet care/veterinary community on access to care and to better incorporate the human-animal bond into veterinary medicine. Use data to drive DEI efforts within the pet care community and to show the power of pets for social benefit.

**Advocacy** – Advance the Federal FSA/HSA legislative effort, demonstrating the strong connection between pet and human health.