



HUMANE SOCIETY 
OF WEST MICHIGAN

2026-2028 Strategic Plan

Three Year Strategic Plan (2026-2028)



About Humane Society of West Michigan:

Since 1883, Humane Society of West Michigan has been serving Kent County, other counties in Michigan, and other states that are overpopulated with companion animals in need of homes.

HSWM is West Michigan's leading animal welfare organization and shelter, and serves nearly 3,000 animals on an annual basis through adoption and community resource programs.



Overview of Strategic Plan:

Humane Society of West Michigan's strategic plan sets a clear roadmap to strengthen the organization, expand its impact, and better serve animals and the community. At the heart of the plan are four strategic priorities that guide decision-making, resource allocation, and program development.

- Organizational Excellence focuses on building a resilient, well-supported organization by investing in team development, improving quality of animal care, and ensuring facilities, technology, and resources are strategically maintained and upgraded.
- Program Enhancement emphasizes strengthening, expanding, and aligning programs to maximize impact. Through consistent data tracking, clear evaluation processes, and intentional growth planning, HSWM ensures programs and events are effective, accountable, and responsive to community needs.
- Financial Growth seeks to increase the organization's sustainability and capacity by deepening donor engagement, optimizing the return on investment for vendors and events, and identifying new mission-aligned revenue sources to diversify funding.
- Visibility & Engagement focuses on raising HSWM's profile and building stronger connections with the community. This includes a dedicated marketing plan, a refreshed brand identity and website, and enhanced collaboration with other shelters to leverage shared programs, resources, and animal transfers.

Together, these priorities position HSWM to advance its mission, enhance care for animals, and strengthen our role as a trusted community leader and resource.



Strategic Planning Process & Participants:

Humane Society of West Michigan's strategic plan covers three years of operations, with implementation taking place from 2026 through 2028.

The plan was developed in partnership between the shelter leadership team and the organization's Executive Committee. Additionally, HSWM's staff and Board of Directors participated in the process through focus groups and strategic surveys.

Mission | Vision | Core Values

As part of the strategic planning process, Humane Society of West Michigan worked to enhance our mission statement, vision, and core values to better reflect our community and commitment to growth as West Michigan's leading animal welfare organization and shelter.

MISSION

To inspire a humane future for animals through education and support.

VISION

We are leaders in a world where every animal is respected and protected.

CORE VALUES

BE THE UNDERDOG

- Hard Work
- Passion
- Grit

BE BRILLIANT

- Educate
- Innovate
- Adapt

BE A VOICE

- Advocate
- Support
- Collaborate

BE FREE

- Five Freedoms
- Fear Free
- Accessible

Be The Underdog: HSWM works hard to provide care and second chances to every animal that comes through our doors, especially those with above-and-beyond medical and behavioral needs. We achieve this purpose through hard work, passion, and grit.

Be Brilliant: As the community's leading animal welfare organization and shelter, HSWM aims to be at the forefront of innovation. We achieve this through continuing education and our ability to adapt to our environment.

Be A Voice: HSWM stands to be a voice for the voiceless. We achieve this by advocating for the cause, supporting pets and our community, and collaborating with other organizations.

Be Free: HSWM utilizes "Fear Free" shelter practices, which aim to improve the experiences of animals while in a shelter environment. Our staff and volunteers also actively practice the "Five Freedoms" which are an internationally recognized standard of animal care. These core freedoms include:

1. Freedom from hunger and thirst
2. Freedom from discomfort
3. Freedom from pain, injury, or disease
4. Freedom to express normal behavior
5. Freedom from fear and distress.

Additionally, HSWM aims to be accessible to all community members, through both our facility and programming.

Strategic Priority #1: Operational Excellence



What is Operational Excellence?

Operational Excellence is the foundation that enables Humane Society of West Michigan to fulfill its mission with compassion, consistency, and impact.

This strategic priority focuses on strengthening the internal systems, people, and resources that support lifesaving work, ensuring our organization is resilient, well equipped, and prepared for the future.

Below are the objectives HSWM will implement to achieve Operational Excellence.



Key Performance Indicators

- Improved staff satisfaction & retention
- Training plans for key roles
- Benefits & professional development review



Team Development & Retention

Team Development & Retention focuses on supporting a skilled, engaged workforce through consistent onboarding and training, competitive and meaningful benefits, and clear pathways for professional and career growth, ensuring team members feel prepared, valued, and invested in a future with Humane Society of West Michigan.



Identify Capital Needs

Identifying Capital Needs focuses on evaluating and planning for the facilities, equipment and technology required to support Humane Society of West Michigan's mission. Through a comprehensive review, the organization will identify priorities for growth and improvement, ensuring resources are allocated strategically and sustainably.

Key Performance Indicators

- Creation of prioritized needs list
- Detailed plan for fulfilling capital needs
- Review potential for feasibility study for capital project(s)

Key Performance Indicators

- Create animal analytics dashboard
- Update SOPs
- Ensure staff training continuously aligns with best practices



Quality of Animal Care

Quality of Animal Care focuses on delivering the highest standards of welfare by creating and maintaining protocols aligned with industry best practices. By utilizing and tracking our animal care data, HSWM will continuously evaluate outcomes, identify areas for improvement, and make informed decisions that strengthen the well-being for every animal.

Strategic Priority #2: Program Enhancement

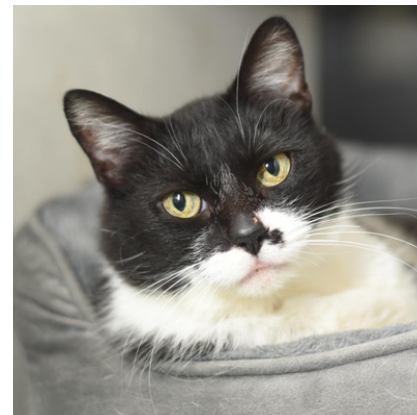


What is Program Enhancement?

Program Enhancement focuses on strengthening and growing Humane Society of West Michigan's programs through consistent data tracking, shared performance indicators, and clear evaluation processes.

By measuring return on impact and return on investment, HSWM will refine and adapt programs as needed, while increasing participation and volunteer engagement through intentional planning and growth.

Below are the objectives HSWM will implement to achieve Program Enhancement.



Key Performance Indicators

- Creation and utilization of shared data tracking system
- Establish KPIs for every program



Shared Data Tracking

Shared Data Tracking focuses on establishing clear KPIs for each program and creating consistent, shared data tracking templates across the organization. By aligning data collection with stakeholder needs, HSWM will improve transparency, strengthen decision-making, and ensure programs are effectively measuring impact and outcomes.



Program Consistency

Program Consistency ensures programs and events are delivered with clarity, accountability, and measurable impact. This objective focuses on establishing clear evaluation processes, defined responsibilities, and structured timelines, using return on impact for programs and return on investment for events to guide decisions.

Key Performance Indicators

- Create evaluation tool for events and external vendors
- Increase financial efficiency for vendors, programs, and events

Key Performance Indicators

- Create annual calendar of programs and events
- Increase program/event participation and number of volunteers



Program Growth

Program Growth focuses on expanding the reach and impact of HSWM's programs by increasing participation and volunteer involvement. Through intentional annual planning and a coordinated calendar of programs and events, this objective ensures sustainable growth that meets community needs and strengthens lifesaving efforts.

Strategic Priority #3: Financial Growth



What is Financial Growth?

Financial Growth focuses on strengthening HSWM's long-term sustainability, growth, and capacity to serve more animals.

This priority emphasizes increasing donor engagement through thoughtful stewardship and diverse opportunities for involvement, assessing the ROI of vendors and programs, and identifying new mission-aligned revenue sources to expand funding and support organizational growth.

Below are the objectives HSWM will implement to achieve Financial Growth.



Key Performance Indicators

- Increase donor retention rate
- Grow average donation size
- Incorporate additional stakeholders (board, volunteers, etc.) in stewardship process



Grow Donor Engagement

Grow Donor Engagement focuses on building stronger relationships with supporters by enhancing donor stewardship, creating more opportunities for involvement, and engaging a range of stakeholders in the stewardship process. This objective ensures donors feel valued, connected to HSWM, and inspired to contribute to the organization's impact over the long term.



Evaluate ROI for Vendors & Events

Evaluate ROI for Vendors & Events focuses on ensuring HSWM's resources are used effectively by assessing the performance of both facility and event vendors as well as programs and events. This objective includes developing an ROI tool to guide data-driven decisions that maximize impact and organizational efficiency.

Key Performance Indicators

- Creation of evaluation tool for events, vendors, and programs

Key Performance Indicators

- Identify new mission-aligned revenue stream
- Create implementation plan and first steps to launch new revenue stream



Develop New Revenue Source(s)

Develop New Revenue Sources focuses on expanding HSWM's financial capacity by exploring new mission-aligned earned income opportunities. This objective aims to diversify funding streams, support organizational growth, and increase the resources available to care for animals and serve the community.

Strategic Priority #4: Visibility & Engagement



What is Visibility & Engagement?

Visibility & Engagement focuses on increasing HSWM's visibility, strengthening community connections, and building strategic partnerships to amplify impact.

This priority includes developing a dedicated marketing plan; leading a rebrand & website redesign to enhance accessibility and brand clarity; and expanding collaboration with other shelters through shared programs to better serve animals and the community.

Below are the objectives HSWM will implement to achieve Visibility & Engagement.



Key Performance Indicators

- Develop organizational marketing plan with clear KPIs
- Align internal communications and develop shared language system



Develop Marketing Plan

Develop Marketing Plan focuses on creating a strategic approach to communications that strengthens HSWM's brand and outreach. This objective includes auditing current marketing efforts, aligning internal communications and language, and developing an internal program calendar to guide consistent, impactful engagement with the community.



Rebrand & Website Redesign

Rebrand & Website Redesign focuses on refreshing HSWM's brand identity and digital presence. This objective includes partnering with a branding firm, redesigning the website for improved usability and accessibility, and reevaluating brand standards to ensure consistency and clarity across all communications.

Key Performance Indicators

- Redesign website for improved usability and accessibility
- Reevaluate and refresh HSWM's brand identity

Key Performance Indicators

- Identify key partner organizations
- Create shared resources
- Collaborate through animal transfers and programming



Shelter Collaboration

Collaborating with other shelters focuses on strengthening partnerships to expand HSWM's reach and resources. This objective includes identifying key partner organizations and developing shared programs, resources, and animal transfers to improve outcomes for animals and better serve the community.