



Legislation Text

File #: Int 1483-2019, Version: A

Int. No. 1483-A

By Council Members Levin, Levine, Brannan, Holden, Chin, Ayala, Louis, Adams, Rivera, Salamanca, Gennaro and the Public Advocate (Mr. Williams)

A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to a plan to accommodate pets of families and individuals experiencing homelessness in shelter

Be it enacted by the Council as follows:

Section 1. Chapter 3 of title 21 of the administrative code of the city of New York is amended by adding a new section 21-325 to read as follows:

§ 21-325 Pet accommodation plan. a. Definitions. For purposes of this section, the following terms have the following meanings:

Pet. The term “pet” means a domesticated animal that is in the lawful possession of a person whose primary purpose in possessing such animal is to keep such animal as a pet.

Shelter. The term “shelter” means any form of temporary housing, including emergency housing, provided by the department to homeless individuals or families.

b. No later than 180 days after the effective date of the local law that added this section, the department shall submit to the speaker of the council a plan to accommodate pets of families and individuals experiencing homelessness with the objective that homeless individuals and families that possess pets need not surrender their pets upon entering shelter or forgo shelter to avoid surrendering their pets. Such plan shall:

1. Outline existing rules and regulations that apply to pets in shelter, including all licensing and vaccination requirements;

2. Assess and report on the health and sanitation implications of pets in shelter, as well as the physical plant requirements for facilities that accept pets;

3. Identify existing providers under contract with the department that have locations that will permit homeless individuals and families that possess pets to enter shelter with their pets;

4. Outline steps the department can take to prioritize acquisition of facilities and contracting for services, in each borough to the extent practicable, that will permit homeless individuals and families that possess pets to enter shelter with their pets;

5. Explore temporary arrangements for the care of pets of homeless individuals and families that will promote the return of such pets to the possession of their owners, including arrangements such as animal shelters, as defined in section 17-802, and not-for-profit organizations that provide foster care for such pets;

6. Identify city-provided and other resources available to homeless individuals and families that possess pets, including but not limited to not-for-profit organizations that provide housing that accommodates pets or that arrange foster care placements for pets of homeless persons, and develop an efficient method for consolidating and sharing information about such resources;

7. Outline the steps necessary in order to collect, where practicable, the following information:

(a) The average number of homeless individuals and families that possess pets that enter shelter each month, disaggregated by individuals and families and by the type of animal owned; and

(b) The amount of funds required to accommodate pets of families and individuals experiencing homelessness in shelter;

8. Identify barriers to the department's ability to accommodate pets of families and individuals experiencing homelessness in shelter, and potential ways of overcoming such barriers; and

9. In collaboration with the department of social services, outline steps to address the accommodation of pets of individuals and families provided shelter under programs managed by the department of social services, including pets of victims of domestic violence who seek shelter pursuant to section 131-u of the social services law.

§ 2. This local law takes effect immediately.

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LS #8840
8/18/2021 10:40pm