



Legislation Text

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Int. No. 1483

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

A Local Law in relation to a plan to accommodate pets of homeless individuals and families in the shelter system

Be it enacted by the Council as follows:

Section 1. Pet accommodation plan. a. Definitions. For purposes of this section, the following terms have the following meanings:

City. The term “city” means the city of New York.

Department. The term “department” means the department of homeless services.

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 city to homeless individuals or families.

b. No later than 180 days after the effective date of this local law, the department shall submit to the speaker of the council a plan to accommodate pets of homeless individuals and families with the objective of ensuring 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. Prioritize acquisition of facilities and contracting for services that will permit homeless individuals and families that possess pets to enter shelter with their pets, and ensure that such facilities or services are available in every borough;

2. 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 not-for-profit organizations that provide foster care for such pets;

3. Identify city-provided and other resources available to homeless individuals and families with 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;

4. To the extent possible, estimate the following information:

(a) The average numbers of homeless individuals and families with pets that enter shelter on a monthly basis, disaggregated by individuals and families and by the type of animal owned;

(b) The amount of funds required to implement such plan, disaggregated by such plan's distinct initiatives and functions;

5. Identify barriers, if any, to the city's ability to accommodate pets of homeless individuals and families, and potential ways of overcoming such barriers; and

6. In collaboration with the department of social services, 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.