



MAKE YOUR CITY THE NEXT GUARDIAN CITY:

STEPS FOR CODIFYING GUARDIAN LANGUAGE IN THE ANIMAL ORDINANCES OF YOUR COMMUNITY

We hope that the following guidelines will simplify your efforts towards codifying the guardian language in your community. These are only general guidelines and may vary from one area to another.

Some tips to keep in mind:

Maintain Communication with IDA: We're here to help! Email or call our Guardian campaigners with updates on your progress or stumbling blocks you are encountering. If you have questions you can't answer, problems you are uncertain on how to handle, or need advice on how to proceed, please let us know. It is likely that we've dealt with a similar problem in the past.

Stay Positive: Do not be discouraged if you encounter stumbling blocks along the way. Most social reform generates opposition and controversy. Remember that you are not alone, that there are citizens across the country that believe in the importance of this language change and are working in much the same way as you to codify the language in their area. Do not forget your motivation – defending companion animals who are mistreated as mere property, commodities, or things.

Be a Guardian ambassador: Regardless of negative attitudes, arguments or comments, always be polite and respectful in speech and in letters/articles that you write. Keep in mind that some people may object simply because they do not understand. Others may assume it is only an attempt to be "politically correct." Finally, some people may have been influenced by groups such as the American kennel club who view animals as commodities to be bought and sold and actively misinform the public about the word "guardian."

Follow-up is essential: Follow-up phone calls and emails are important for government officials, humane societies, and anybody else from whom you'll be requesting support. Additionally, once you've acquired supporters, be sure to update them on the progress of the campaign. Be diligent with your communication in order to keep them interested and enthusiastic.

(Over Please)



WHERE TO START:

1) **Verify that your city or county's current animal-related ordinances contain the term "owner."** You can get a copy of the ordinance by contacting City Hall or by visiting your city or county website and searching for "municipal code" or "ordinances".

2) **Schedule a phone call** so that IDA's Guardian staff can explain the process to you and answer your initial questions. Provide your mailing address so that we may mail you a "Guardian Pack" containing information such as sample city ordinances, letters of support, testimonials, and other information.

3) **Review information in the Guardian pack and on www.guardiancampaign.com.** Make certain you understand the Campaign's objectives and the importance of the proposed language shift from "owner" to "guardian". Inquire about anything that seems unclear. If you have a question, chances are others have had the same one. Please contact us for help.

4) **Research how your local governmental process works.** Learn exactly how your local (city, county or state) government is structured and what steps are necessary to introduce the new language into law. You may want to call the general information number for your city, county or state government to determine who you should contact to find out how your local process works. The following questions are important:

- What *type of government* do we have - a City Council, Board of Supervisors or another system? Do we have an Animal Welfare Commission that serves as an advisory committee to the Board of Supervisors or City Council?
- What is the best way to go about *introducing the proposed language change*?
- Will there be *public meetings* where the proposal will be discussed? What are the dates and times of the meetings and when should speakers plan to arrive in order to sign up? How much time will be allowed for each person and how many speakers will be allowed? Start attending your local city council meetings as well as on the superior or county level as needed to become familiar with the system.

5) **Revise your animal-related ordinance(s).** Copy the animal-related ordinance(s) onto a Word document and simply replace the term "owner(s)" with the term "guardian(s)" throughout. Review your changes to make certain that the document reads as intended. Do not insert the word "guardianship". This term denotes a legal change. You will also need to



add a clause clarifying the legal equivalence of “guardian(s)” and “owner(s)” Please see the examples of existing clauses that are included in the Guardian Pack.

GETTING SUPPORT:

Support from the groups below will help your efforts tremendously. Humane societies, shelters and animal care/control agencies are especially important because it is likely that their opinion matters to your local government. Avoid publicizing your efforts to the greater public until you have gained the endorsement of local humane societies and government decision-makers. Otherwise, you may face fierce opposition before your campaign has gained enough momentum to sustain it.

1) Contact local humane societies, shelters, rescue groups and other organizations and individuals that you feel might be supportive. Start with people whom you know personally. Send the director a letter of intent (IDA can assist you with this letter) explaining why you hope to amend the current ordinance and how the community will benefit (higher shelter adoption rates, fewer abused or abandoned animals, more responsible citizens, etc). Follow up on your letter with a phone call to ask the director to help lead the ordinance change effort or to write a letter of support. Later, you may copy this letter to local rescue groups, animal advocacy organizations and school groups, and to other supportive individuals such as community leaders, writers, lawyers and/or local celebrities. Sharing the letter with other groups encourages Humane Society support and also encourages input and involvement of influential community members. If your local animal shelters are not supportive, please let IDA know. We may need to adjust your strategy for working on the campaign.

2) Approach an animal-friendly government decision-maker: Once you’ve gained support from your local animal shelter, the next step is identifying a member of your city council or board of supervisors/commissioners who is an animal supporter and may consider being the “sponsor” of the effort within your city, county or state government. Sponsorship means that he/she will put it officially on the agenda for a vote at a city council meeting. It also means that he/she will explain the issue to the other council members or supervisors/commissioners. When you get to this stage, you’ll need “Guardian Packs” for every member of your city council, board of supervisors/commissioners. Please make sure you have spoken to IDA before you approach a city council member.

3) Build a solid base of local grassroots community of supporters. Reach out to individuals and organizations beyond the local animal protection organizations – friends, family, veterinarians, teachers, lawyers, educators, writers, newspaper editors and



reporters, ministers and other community leaders. Explain the importance of codifying the language, i.e., animal abuse, homeless animals, etc. Feel free to utilize or photocopy any of the material IDA sends to you. If you don't know the answer to a question, be honest and contact us. You may also want to circulate a petition in your community and/or ask IDA to send a postcard to its local members to collect additional support.

4) Organize supporters to attend and speak at the public meetings. Get firm commitments from prominent supporters who say they will be willing to speak out in support. Provide them with specific dates, times and addresses (including directions, if necessary) where the pertinent City Council or other meetings will be held.

If you have questions or need help, please call or email a member of the Guardian team:

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Keep in mind that one person can make a difference. It has happened in other cities, and can happen in your community too. Thank you for caring about our animal friends!