



Athens Area Humane Society Expands Pet Food Bank Three-Fold in 2025, Delivering 959,200 Meals to Pets in 39 Georgia Counties

ATHENS, GA (January 27, 2026). Economic pressures force impossible choices. When families cannot afford pet care, beloved animals face shelter surrender—a devastating outcome the Athens Area Humane Society works relentlessly to prevent.

Nationwide, approximately 20 million pets belong to families below the poverty line, with millions more teetering on the brink. Pet owners increasingly struggle to secure veterinary care, food, and essential supplies—circumstances that threaten the human-animal bond.

"Keeping pets with families who love them isn't just our mission—it's our mandate," says Steven Jackson, Volunteer and Community Engagement Manager at AAHS. "Our 2025 distribution of 193,630 pounds represents more than meals; it represents stability, hope, and families staying whole. In 2026, our goal is to expand distribution to at least 250,000 pounds, reaching even more families and shelter partners who depend on this lifeline."

The 126-year-old animal welfare organization deploys comprehensive human-animal support services: low-cost spay/neuter and wellness clinics, quarterly community vaccine events, and the Full Bellies Food Bowl program. In 2025 alone, AAHS delivered 959,200 pet meals to families and shelter partners from 39 Georgia counties.

The Full Bellies Food Bowl program eliminates barriers that prevent pet families from accessing essential resources. Every first and third Saturday of the month, from 9 AM to 1 PM, families access pet food and supplies at AAHS's Mitchell Bridge Road campus - no appointment or eligibility verification is needed.

"Witnessing families' relief when they receive pet food transforms your perspective entirely," states Omar Meshaal, UGA student volunteer. "You realize you're not just distributing a bag of food - you're preserving relationships that define people's lives. Every bag represents a family that stays together."

Community members sustain AAHS's Full Bellies Food Bowl through pet food donations, supply contributions, and volunteer hours. Current needs and donation information can be found at AAHS's website at www.athenshumanesociety.org.

About Athens Area Humane Society: Founded in 1899, AAHS operates as a no-kill, community-supported organization rescuing and protecting companion animals through comprehensive wellbeing services, adoption facilitation, and compassionate advocacy. Operations rely entirely on contributions, grants, bequests, investments, and service fees.

Save a life: www.athenshumanesociety.org/donate