

The Power of Pets: Enhancing Senior Health and Happiness

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Health Benefits of Pets

REPORTED BY PET OWNERS AGE 50-80

79% Reduce stress

73% Provide a sense of purpose

65% Connect with others

64% Be physically active



April 2019 Report: How Pets Contribute to Healthy Aging

What Seniors Say About How Their Pets Help Them

- Help them enjoy life (88%)
- Make them feel loved (86%)
- Reduce stress (79%)
- Provide a sense of purpose (73%)
- Help them stick to a routine (62%)



What Seniors Say About How Their Pets Help Them

- Connects them with other people (65%)
- Help them be physically active (64% overall; 78% among dog owners)
- Help them cope with physical & emotional symptoms (60%)
- Take their mind off pain (34%)
- More than half (52%) cited companionship as their main reason for getting a pet



Pet Ownership Saves \$22.7 Billion in Health Care Costs

Annual Health Care Cost Savings Associated with Pet Ownership

ANNUAL HEALTH CARE COST SAVINGS OF PET OWNERSHIP	SAVINGS
Physician Office Visits	\$14,986,493,000
Obesity	\$4,536,476,000
Treatment of C. difficile Infections	\$90,470,000
Mental Health Costs for Anxiety in Children 8-10 Years Old	\$671,711,000
Mental Health Care Costs of Socially Isolated Seniors	\$1,776,146,000
Veteran PTSD Treatments (Emotional Support & Service Animals)	\$688,017,000
Total Identifiable Cost Savings	\$22,749,313,000



The full report, *The Health Care Cost Savings of Pet Ownership*, was made possible by a grant from Banfield Pet Hospital and is available for download at

habri.org/health-care-cost-savings

Challenges for Seniors

Financial Barriers: Veterinary care, food, and other pet-related expenses.

Physical Limitations: Mobility issues that can make pet care more challenging without assistance.

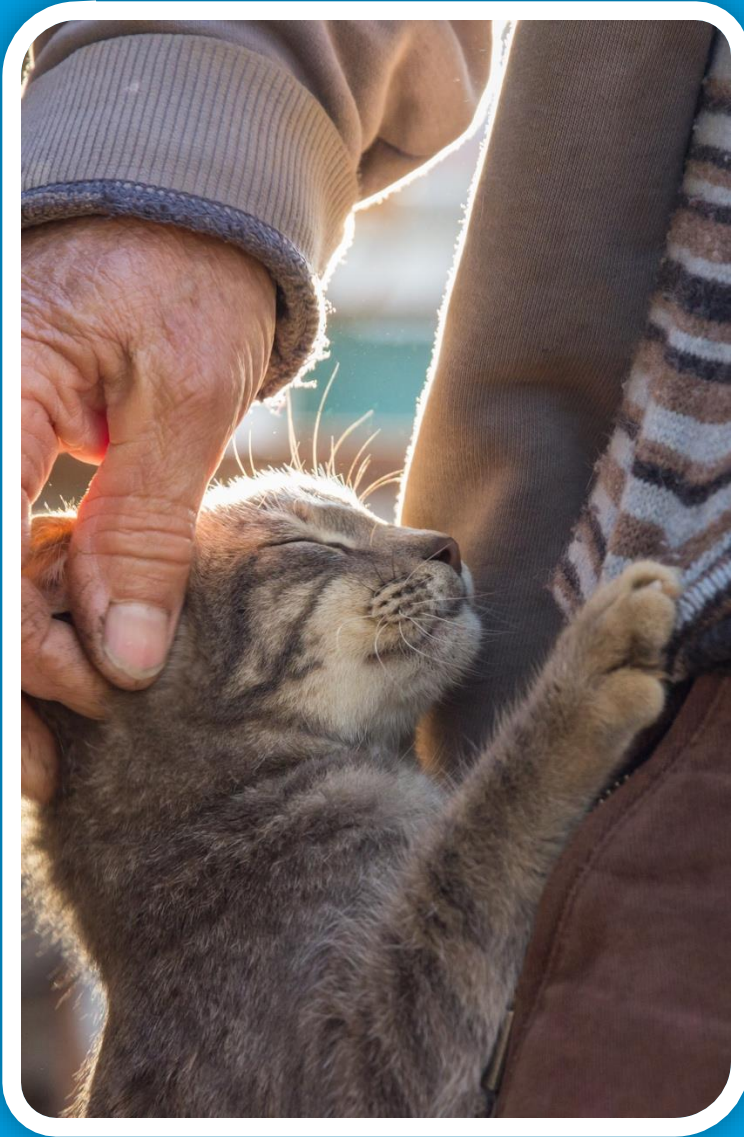
Social and Housing Barriers: Lack of support from family or restrictions in housing that limit the ability to have pets.



Challenges for Seniors

- Difficult to travel or enjoy activities away from home (54%)
- Puts a strain on their budget (18%)
- Pet's health takes priority over their own health needs (15%)
 - Lived alone (22%)
 - Fair or poor physical health (26%)
- Caused them to fall or otherwise injure themselves (6%)





Inequity Leads to Poor Outcomes

Pets

- Prolonged recovery
- Premature death
- Relinquishment

People

- Familial distress
- Veterinary care team moral dilemmas
- Animal shelter workload

Communities

- Zoonotic disease threats
- Strain on social services

More Families Are Struggling

% of U.S. aggregate household income held by lower-, middle- and upper-income households

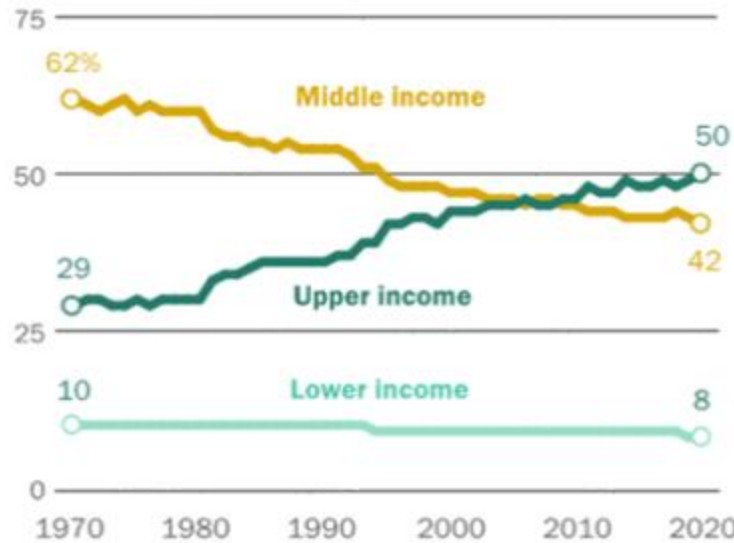
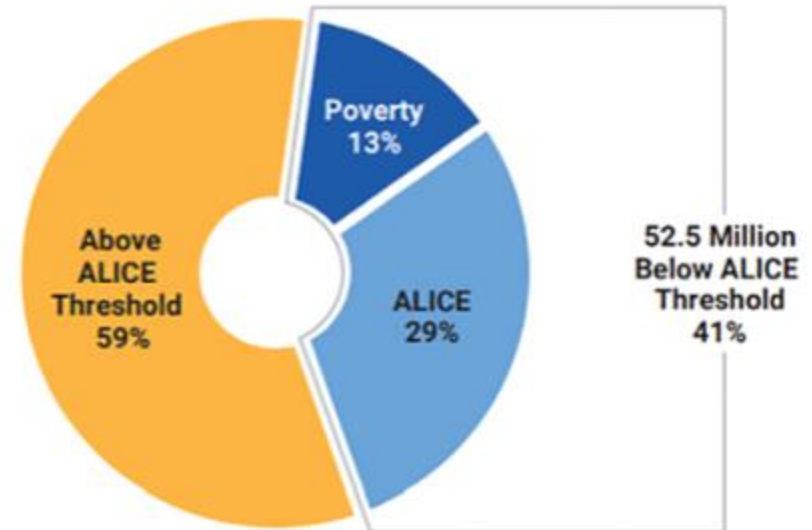


FIG. 2 Share of aggregate income held by US middle class has plunged since 1970. Note: Households are assigned to income tiers based on their size-adjusted income in the calendar year before the survey year. Their unadjusted incomes are then totaled to compute the share of US aggregate household income held by each income tier. Shares may not add to 100% due to rounding. (From Kochhar R, Sechopoulos S. How the American middle class has changed in the past five decades. Pew Research Center. April 20, 2022. Accessed January 5, 2023. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2022/04/20/how-the-american-middle-class-has-changed-in-the-past-five-decades/>. Source: Pew Research Center analysis of the current population survey, annual social and economic supplement (IPUMS).)



* In the U.S., out of 127 million households, there were 16.2 million (12.8%) in poverty plus 36.3 million (28.6%) that were ALICE, which totals to 52.5 million (41.4%) below the ALICE Threshold and rounds to 41% in this Report.

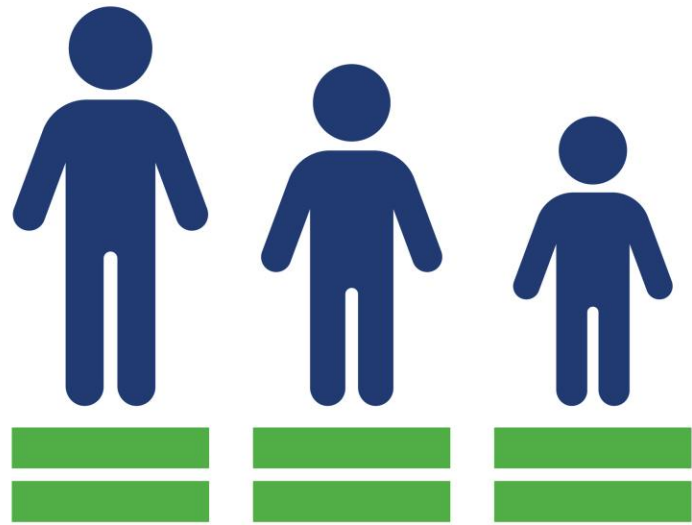
FIG. 1 Percentage of US Households who are Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE). (From United for ALICE. *On Uneven Ground - ALICE and Financial Hardship in the U.S.*; 2020:3.)

Struggling Knoxville Families

- **39%** of Knoxville residents live under the ALICE threshold (United Way of Greater Knoxville)
- ALICE - asset limited, income constrained, employed. (Formerly called the “working poor”)
 - Employed and earning above the federal poverty line but still struggle to cover basic needs like housing, food, childcare, healthcare, and transportation
 - Not counted in traditional poverty statistics, shedding light on a "hidden" demographic

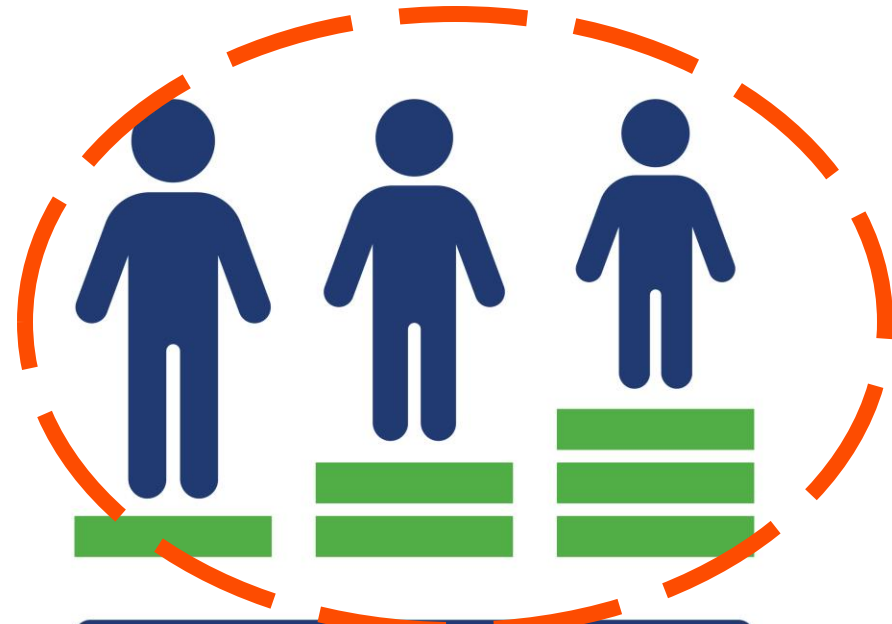


GOAL: Family Health Equity



EQUALITY

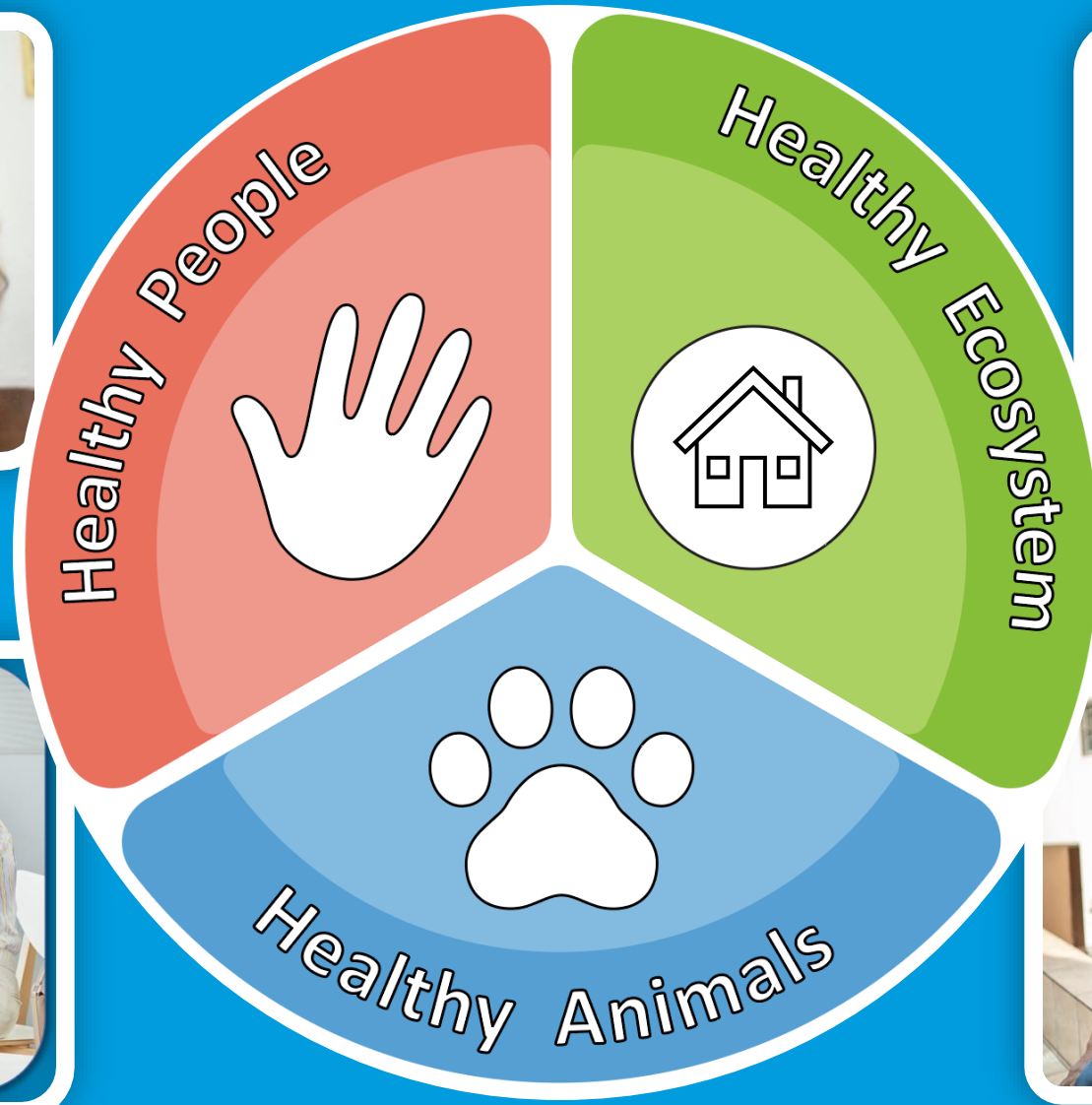
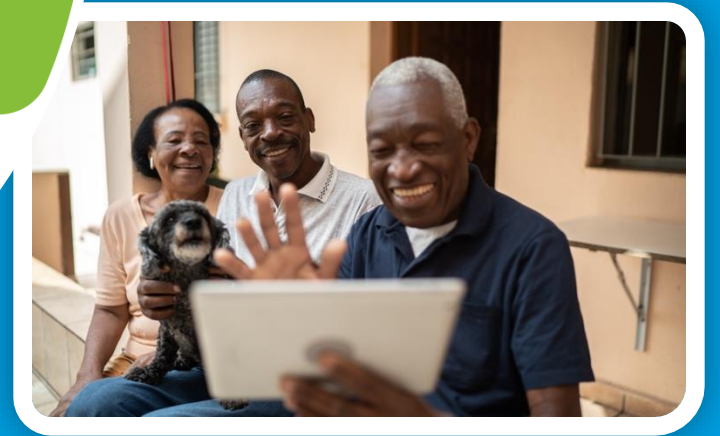
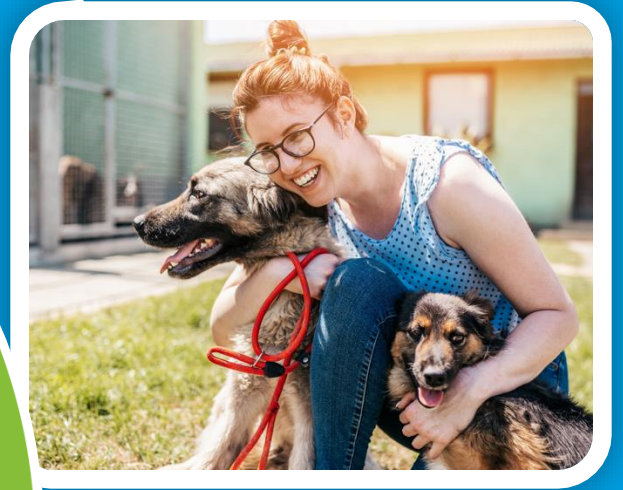
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EQUITY



One Health System



One Health Solution

AlignCare

Serving Families, Pets and Communities





Help Knoxville seniors with pets stay healthy and together by supporting AlignCare.