



**ANIMAL
JUSTICE**

Strategic Plan

2026-2028

Leading the legal fight for animals in Canada





Executive Director's Note

When Animal Justice was founded, our vision of a Canada where animals had meaningful legal protections felt like a distant aspiration—a mountain so tall it was difficult to imagine reaching the summit. But it was a climb we knew we had to begin.

Since becoming the Executive Director in 2015, I've had the immense privilege of witnessing Animal Justice grow from a small group of determined volunteers into one of Canada's leading voices for animals. We have consistently punched above our weight—taking on powerful industries, winning in court, and passing groundbreaking new laws. Our history is one of action. We've argued on behalf of animals at the Supreme Court, passed sweeping new federal animal protection laws, defeated Ontario's ag gag law in court, and exposed systemic cruelty through hard-hitting investigations—from secret dog labs to the largest egg farms. Every day, we're committed to building a world where animal suffering is a thing of the past.

This Strategic Plan for 2026–2028 sets out our priorities to achieve our vision of a compassionate Canada where animals are respected and enjoy the freedoms they deserve. This plan reflects both the urgency of the challenges ahead and the unprecedented opportunities for building a better country for animals. The climb ahead is far from over, but with every win in court, every new law passed, and every person who is inspired to join us, we get a little closer to the top of the mountain.

Real change takes persistence, courage, and people who are willing to imagine something better. Thank you for your determination to keep climbing with us until animals finally receive the protection and respect they deserve.

Sincerely,

Camille Labchuk
Executive Director

Contents

Executive Director’s Note	2
Vision & Mission	4
Values & Principles	5
Guiding Principles	6
What Sets Us Apart	7
The Animals We Work to Help	8
Our History	14
Our Focus Areas & Objectives	16
How You Can Help	20



Vision & Mission

Vision

Our vision is a compassionate Canada where animals are respected, have legal protections, and enjoy the freedoms they deserve.

Mission

Our mission is to lead the legal fight for animals in Canada.

We work to pass strong new animal protection laws, push to hold industries accountable for harming animals, and fight on behalf of animals in court.

Our aim is to end animal suffering by creating legal, social, and corporate policy change for animals in Canada.



Values & Principles



Core Values

Impact

Our work makes animals' lives better. We work to end all forms of animal suffering, but we focus on tackling the worst forms of suffering that affect the most animals. We regularly examine and re-evaluate our progress and approach, using evidence to decide how best to achieve lasting legal, social, and corporate policy change.

Nimbleness

We are agile. We quickly adapt to emerging opportunities and new challenges, embracing fresh ideas and technology to strengthen our work helping animals.

Determination

We are unwavering. Transforming Canada's relationship with animals is a monumental task, but we have the courage to persevere and an unyielding commitment to our long-term vision.

Collaboration

We believe a better world is built together. We work with allies and partners to amplify our power and achieve shared goals.

Compassion

We value the lives and dignity of animals. We recognize that the systems that harm animals also harm fellow humans.

Inclusivity

We are building a movement for all. We believe everyone has a vital role to play in making change for animals and welcome people from all backgrounds.

Excellence

We are committed to the highest standards in everything we do, from our legal work to our public advocacy.

Guiding Principles

- **Animals are thinking, feeling beings** who deserve a life free from harm and suffering.
- **Animals are not mere property.** They have the right to species-appropriate legal protections that respect their sentience and dignity, including legal standing.
- **Government, industries, and other institutions must be held accountable** for their role in causing animals to suffer.
- **We champion the right to speak up.** We stand with animal advocates and protect their right to speak out on behalf of animals.
- **Transparency matters.** People deserve to know the unfiltered truth about how animals are treated, free from industry spin and misleading marketing.
- **Our work is grounded in evidence and science.** We rely on the best available data, scientific research, and veterinary evidence to guide our advocacy.
- **Animals deserve laws to protect them, not industry self-regulation.** We advocate for strong laws and transparent public oversight to ensure industries cannot operate in the shadows.
- **Animal suffering and human suffering are deeply intertwined.** Ending animal suffering creates a more compassionate and just society for humans, too.
- **Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples is a responsibility shared by all,** including animal advocates.



What Sets Us Apart

Legal Experts

Animal Justice is Canada's leading organization dedicated to using the full force of the law to protect animals. We are uniquely positioned to strengthen legal protections for animals and win historic legal battles, driving change where it matters most.

Revealing the Truth

We are the only Canadian organization dedicated to systematically exposing the truth about animal cruelty. Our hard-hitting undercover investigations expose suffering in all sectors, holding the powerful accountable and informing the public.

Highly Effective

We deliver concrete, lasting results for animals by improving laws, shaping public policy, and mobilizing Canadians.

Maximum Impact

With our lean team and strong programmatic focus, we use resources efficiently with a singular goal: to maximize our impact for animals.



The Animals We Work to Help

Animal Justice fights for all animals in Canada across five areas.

1 | Farmed Animals

Factory farming is the single largest cause of animal suffering in Canada, with over a billion animals every year enduring appalling, unacceptable conditions.

Our top priority is protecting animals who are raised and killed for food, due to the sheer scale of their suffering and a shocking lack of legal protections.

In 2024 alone, over 864 million land animals were killed for food in Canada—a record high. An estimated 10 billion aquatic animals also suffer and are killed in commercial fishing and at fish farms. These animals have virtually no legal protections. Most of them live in agonizing conditions that would be illegal if inflicted on a cat or a dog. Most never see the light of day, crammed into dark, windowless sheds, and forced to breathe the stench of their own waste.

Cruel standard practices—including caging hens and trapping mother pigs inside tiny gestation crates—are considered exempt from general animal welfare laws, even though they are widely condemned and banned in other developed nations. Cows, pigs, chickens, and other farmed animals are treated as commodities in an industrial, profit-driven system. They are not recognized as the sensitive, feeling individuals they truly are.

Instead of putting laws in place to protect farmed animals from miserable conditions, governments have abdicated their responsibility and left animals to languish. Industries self-regulate, creating their

own non-binding “standards” that fall far short of what animals need. Meanwhile, farmers and governments have conspired to pass “ag gag” laws that outlaw undercover investigations at farms and slaughterhouses, punishing whistleblowers with massive fines and jail time.

Animal Justice is directly challenging the moral atrocity of factory farming. We won a huge victory by striking down Ontario’s ag gag law in court, and we will continue to litigate strategically against factory farming. We will also keep conducting crucial undercover investigations to expose widespread cruelty hidden from public view. We confront the well-funded propaganda of industry front groups with the unvarnished truth about suffering on farms.

“
In 2024 alone, over 864 million land animals were killed for food in Canada—a record high.
”

Through our strategic corporate campaigns, we pressure some of the largest companies to eliminate some of the worst abuse from their supply chains, such as confining hens and pigs in cruel metal cages. We are also leading a national push for federal oversight over farming, pushing governments to finally take responsibility for protecting farmed animals against some of the worst cruelty.

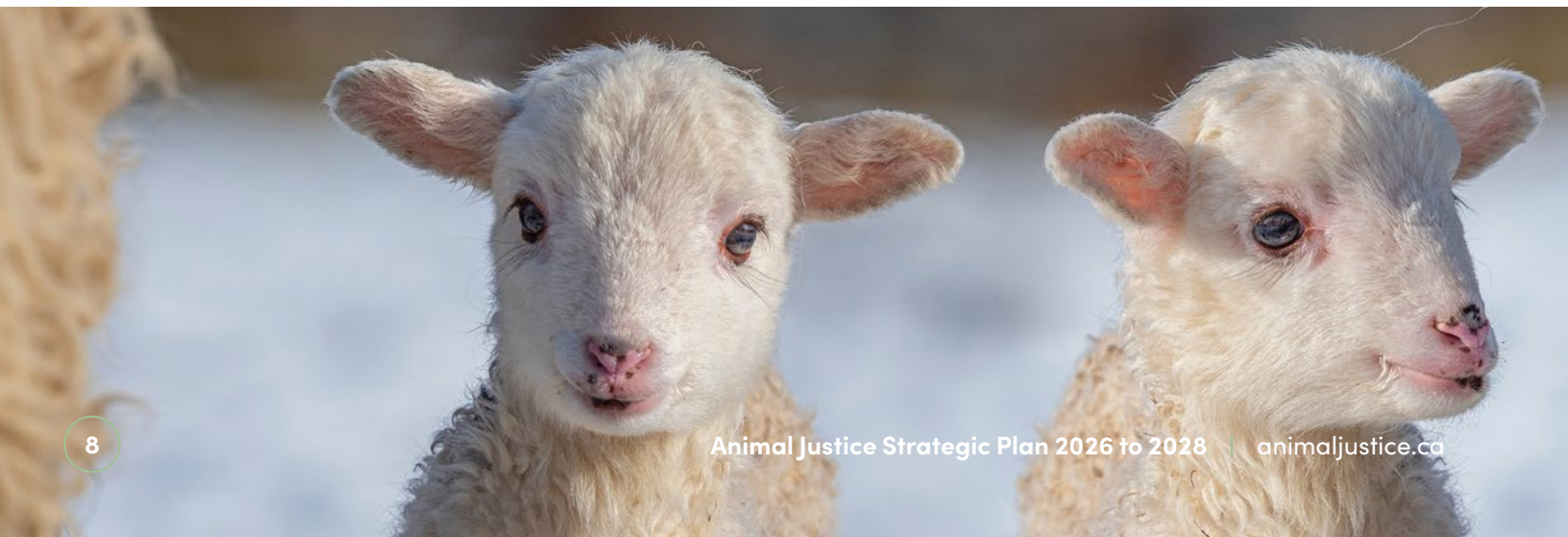


photo credit: Andrew Skowron, We Animals Media





2 | Companion Animals

Companion animals are beloved family members, and the law should treat them that way.

We share our homes and our lives with cats, dogs, and other animal companions, but the Canadian pet industry is a legal black hole, almost entirely unregulated and rife with exploitation. Weak, inconsistent laws and poor enforcement have allowed breeders and pet dealers to flourish behind the scenes, making money off the backs of suffering animals.

Puppy mills and backyard breeders run rampant in Canada—along with other large-scale breeding operations for rabbits, ferrets, hamsters, mice, rats, birds, reptiles, and other exotic animals sold into the pet trade.

“**Animals are crammed into tiny, filthy cages and forced to pump out litter after litter until their bodies give out.**”

Breeders often treat animals as nothing more than commodities. Animals are crammed into tiny, filthy cages and forced to pump out litter after litter until their bodies give out. At one ferret mill we exposed in

Manitoba, hundreds of ferrets were found in horrifying conditions resembling a fur farm, living in squalor and subjected to a life of misery. While breeders profit from selling animals, our animal shelters and rescue groups are left to shoulder the burden of caring for the abandoned and neglected animals in need of homes.

Canada’s legal loopholes also allow for cruel cosmetic mutilations that cause pets a lifetime of pain. Cat declawing (a painful partial amputation of cats’ toes), dog ear cropping, and dog tail docking are still legal in much of Canada. Province by province, we are pushing to ban cruel amputations once and for all.

Although many provinces restrict the ownership of some wild animals, it’s still legal to keep many as pets—no matter how much they suffer in captivity. Ontario, the largest province, has no restrictions whatsoever on exotic animals. Wild animals aren’t pets, and it’s time for our laws to protect them.

Canada must put animals first—not the profits of breeders, puppy mills, exotic animal dealers, and pet stores. Companion animals deserve strong animal protection laws, backed by effective public enforcement to crack down on cruelty. Animal Justice is building a legal framework that treats companion animals as the beloved family members they are.

3 | Animals in laboratories

Animal experimentation in Canadian laboratories is a hidden crisis.

Nearly four million animals like monkeys, dogs, cats, birds, mice, and rats are used in research and testing every year. They are confined to barren conditions out of public view, and forced to endure torturous laboratory experiments—often without any pain relief. There is a shocking lack of oversight: Canada has no federal law to regulate animal experimentation. Instead, experimenters are allowed to self-regulate. This system protects the status quo for researchers and keeps their grant funding flowing, but animals are left out in the cold.

Working with whistleblowers, we exposed a horrific secret dog lab at St. Joseph’s Hospital in London, Ontario, where beagle puppies were being used in gruesome cardiac experiments, forced to endure prolonged heart attacks before being killed. This sparked renewed national conversation about the ethics of animal experimentation, with public and political outrage forcing the lab to close.

The cruelty of animal experimentation isn’t just an ethical failure—it’s a scientific one. Animal models are often misleading because dogs, pigs, and mice aren’t simply mini-humans. They have different physiology and biology, meaning “breakthroughs” usually often don’t translate to human cures. Relying on animal testing is holding back real progress for human medicine, trapping us in an outdated and fundamentally flawed system that relies on bad science.

In 2023, Canada took a step forward by passing laws to end cosmetic testing on animals and begin phasing out toxicity testing on animals—the cruellest and most painful form of animal research. In toxicity tests, animals are subjected to practices like being force-fed deadly substances or having chemicals dripped into their eyes, all to test for product safety. Animal Justice was a vital force behind the toxicity testing law, but we still have a long way to go.

“ They are confined to barren conditions out of public view, and forced to endure torturous laboratory experiments—often without any pain relief. ”

It’s time to leverage public attention on animal testing to start banning some of the worst experiments, and bring in a national legal framework for all labs, with inspections and full public transparency. Canada also needs a national strategy and timeline to end animal experimentation as a whole and to fund a national centre to develop and validate modern, cruelty-free methods like organ-on-a-chip technology, AI modeling, and 3D bioprinting—technologies that are more effective at finding real cures for human diseases.





4 | Animals in Entertainment

Zoos, aquariums, and rodeos are relics of a bygone era, born from a mindset of human domination over the natural world.

Our values have evolved, and most people now recognize that animals don't exist simply to serve as props for our entertainment. Animal displays and performances belong in history books, not in present-day communities.

Animal Justice has gone undercover at zoos and aquariums—including conducting the country's largest ever zoo exposé. Wild animals like elephants, lions, tigers, monkeys, whales, and dolphins belong in their spacious natural habitats—not ripped from the wild and caged for human entertainment. Zoos and aquariums condemn animals to a lifetime of suffering behind bars, often in isolation or in social groups that are unsuited to them. They're condemned to live in cages or tanks that can never simulate their natural habitats or climates.

Animals used in rodeos and circuses endure a different variety of cruelty. They are subjected to abusive, fear-based training that coerces them into unnatural performances. Horses and young cows used in rodeo events have catastrophic injury and death rates, not to mention intense psychological trauma and terror. Well over a hundred animals have died at the Calgary Stampede alone, many of them horses who are killed in the notoriously dangerous

chuckwagon races. Causing distress to animals is illegal, yet rodeos are never prosecuted for cruelty. Canada is in the midst of a powerful shift away from abusing animals for entertainment, with most Canadians now opposing the captivity of zoos and aquariums. The notorious Marineland has closed for good after Animal Justice was instrumental in passing a national ban on keeping whales and dolphins in tanks. Now, we're working to extend those protections to other captive animals like great apes, elephants, and big cats.

“
Animal Justice has gone undercover at zoos and aquariums—including conducting the country's largest ever zoo exposé.
”

The tide is also turning against forcing animals to perform in spectacles of suffering. Circuses using elephants and other wild animals have gone out of business, and rodeos are rapidly losing public support. A strong majority of Canadians oppose rodeo—even in the western provinces where rodeo events are passed off as culture.

Animal Justice will continue fighting to get animals out of zoos, aquariums, rodeos, and other forms of coercive entertainment.

5 | Wild Animals

Canadians share our country with extraordinary and iconic wildlife, from polar bears to orcas, and beavers to coyotes. Yet instead of protecting wild animals, our laws often allow them to suffer and die.

Wild animals are targeted by trophy hunters, shot and poisoned by farmers, killed in the fur trade, and decimated through government-run extermination programs. Trophy hunters kill animals for sport and perverse bragging rights. Coyotes are massacred in killing contests, where hunters compete for prizes by killing as many animals as possible. In penned dog hunting, wild coyotes, foxes, and rabbits are trapped and caged in fenced enclosures, where hunters chase and kill them with dogs in a grotesque bloodsport.

Governments often treat wild animals as pests to be eradicated. Coyotes and wolves are routinely shot and poisoned at the behest of farmers, in taxpayer-funded extermination programs. These cruel practices cause agonizing deaths, and ignore the crucial role wild animals play in ecosystems.

Wild animals like minks, foxes, and chinchillas also suffer on fur farms—living their entire lives inside tiny wire cages, unable to express natural behaviours, and

eventually electrocuted or having their necks snapped for their fur. The fur trade is already in steep decline, with many fur farms shutting down as the public and fashion industry turn their backs on fur. Many countries have already banned fur farms, and now is the time to finish the job of shutting down fur farms for good in Canada, too.

“

Many countries have already banned fur farms, and now is the time to finish the job of shutting down fur farms for good in Canada, too.

”

Change is coming. Public opinion is strongly against trophy hunting, fur farming, and killing contests because this carnage betrays our national values of compassion and respect for wildlife.

Wild animals in Canada need stronger protection, and deserve freedom and safety in their natural habitats. Animal Justice is fighting to ban cruel hunting practices, outlaw fur farming, and end extermination programs.



Our History

Founded and led by lawyers, the team at Animal Justice is passionate, professional, and fights tirelessly to help animals.

KEY EVENTS



2008

Lawyers for Animal Welfare founded as the first national animal law organization



2015

Argued on behalf of animals for the first time at the Supreme Court of Canada



2017

Released Canada's first-ever undercover zoo investigation



2012

Lawyers for Animal Welfare becomes Animal Justice



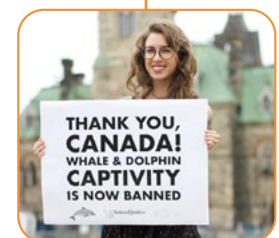
2016

Hired its first full-time Executive Director



2019

Hosted the first annual Canadian Animal Law Conference



Helped pass the first new federal animal protection laws in over 100 years, banning whale and dolphin captivity



2020

Began fighting the spread of ag gag laws

Exposed shocking cruelty on pig farm, leading to cruelty convictions



2023

Spearheaded new laws to phase out animal testing



2025

Exposed dog experiments at Ontario hospital, prompting secret dog lab to close

2021

Animal Justice Academy launches to train and mobilize supporters



2024

Defeated Ontario ag gag law in court, striking down ban on undercover investigations

Exposed systemic abuse of hens through Canada's largest egg farm investigation



Our Focus Areas & Objectives

Legal & Policy Campaigns

Improve laws and corporate policies to protect animals

- Strengthen legal protections
- Give animals a voice in courtrooms
- Promote corporate change in the food system

Inform & Inspire

Build a powerful and effective animal advocacy movement

- Inspire strong public support for protecting animals
- Empower animal advocates to be more active and effective
- Grow the field of animal law

Organizational Strength

Create a resilient organization

- Expand and diversify resources to drive innovative programs and ensure sustainability
- Build a vibrant, inclusive team culture where everyone is empowered to thrive
- Ensure responsible administration and compliance



Legal & Policy Campaigns

Goal: Improve laws and corporate policies to protect animals

Objectives

Strengthen legal protections

Give animals a voice in courtrooms

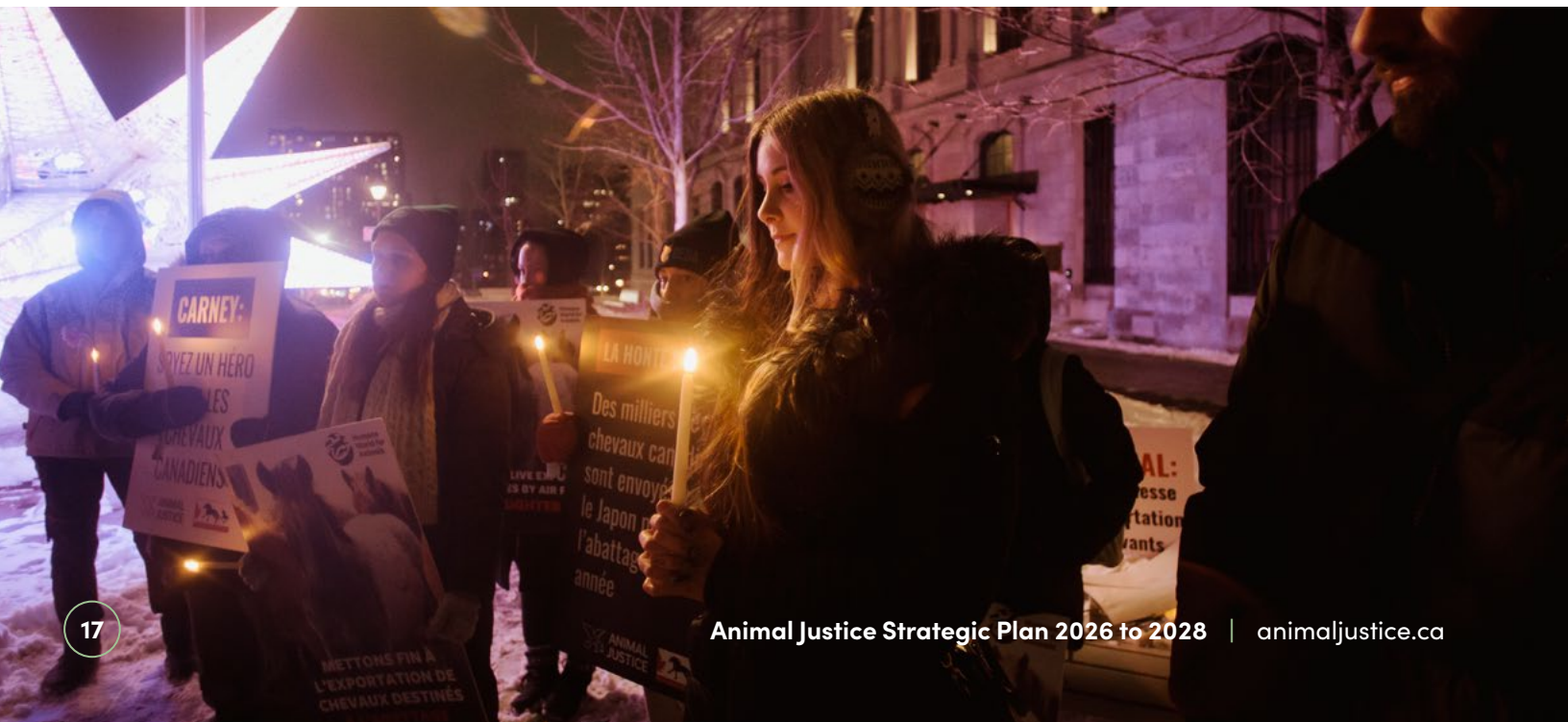
Promote corporate change in the food system

How we're moving forward

1. Champion stronger animal protection laws with lawmakers across Canada
2. Mobilize a powerful national movement and partnerships to win stronger protections for animals
3. End farm industry self-policing by securing a strong national legal framework for farmed animals

1. Use strategic litigation to defend and advance legal protections for animals
2. Fight in court to strike down ag gag laws and other attempts to silence the truth about cruelty

1. Expose hidden abuse in the food system with hard-hitting investigations
2. Win and enforce corporate commitments to eliminate the worst farming abuses, like cages





Inform & Inspire

Goal: Build a powerful and effective animal advocacy movement

Objectives

Inspire strong public support for protecting animals

Empower animal advocates to be more active and effective

Grow the field of animal law

How we're moving forward

1. Grow public awareness by making animal suffering impossible to ignore
2. Shift public opinion with powerful content and trusted media stories
3. Serve as Canada's trusted voice on animal protection

1. Equip animal lovers to become skilled and effective advocates through Animal Justice Academy and other training sessions
2. Deepen engagement and increase mobilization to help more supporters become active in making change

1. Unite and strengthen the movement through our annual conference
2. Catalyze the growth of animal law by increasing its legitimacy & visibility
3. Foster the next generation of animal lawyers

Organizational Strength

Goal: Create a resilient organization

Objectives

Expand and diversify resources to drive innovative programs and ensure sustainability

Build a vibrant, inclusive team culture where everyone is empowered to thrive

Ensure responsible administration and compliance

How we're moving forward

1. Inspire & cultivate a community of passionate, long-term supporters who champion our mission
2. Build powerful, collaborative partnerships with mission-aligned funders to amplify our impact

1. Attract and retain a talented team united by a shared commitment to fulfilling our mission with excellence
2. Create a culture of belonging, where every voice is heard and valued
3. Empower our team through continuous learning and growth

1. Manage assets and allocate resources prudently and responsibly
2. Safeguard the assets of the organization and protect against financial and legal risk
3. Implement a data governance system to protect the integrity of organization data, enabling data-driven decision-making





How You Can Help

To learn more about our work, how to get involved, or to donate, visit www.animaljustice.ca or write to us at info@animaljustice.ca.

We rely on support from individuals to further our mission.

Animal Justice is a non-profit.

It is supported by the [Justice for Animals Foundation](#), a registered charity.