

[Pets are Welcome]TM

**AN ADVOCATE'S
GUIDE TO PETS ARE
WELCOME: EXPANDING
OPTIONS FOR
RENTERS WITH PETS**



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

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A special thank you to St. Hubert's Animal Welfare Center for their contributions to this guide.

Rental housing that welcomes all cats and dogs as pets, regardless of breed or size, is extremely scarce in communities across the United States. Even properties advertised as “pet friendly” usually exclude popular dog breeds and set strict limits on a pet’s weight and size. According to a recent industry survey, **as many as three-fourths of Americans who rent have pets**, so it’s no surprise that difficulty finding and keeping rental housing is a top reason dogs and cats are surrendered to shelters and rescues each year.



WE BELIEVE PEOPLE SHOULD NEVER HAVE TO CHOOSE BETWEEN THEIR HOME AND THEIR PET.

Heartbreaking stories like these are unfortunately very common. Every day, people with pets struggle to find housing that accepts their whole family. That lack of accessible housing often has disastrous consequences, both for people and pets. Some people choose homelessness rather than separation from their four-legged family. But others are forced to relinquish their pets to shelters, ripping those families apart. Being forced to choose between a beloved pet and a safe home has detrimental impacts on people's physical health and emotional well-being, not to mention the fact that it contributes directly to the euthanasia of millions of healthy, adoptable dogs and cats in shelters each year.

REUBEN

lived with his pitbull-type dog, Red, in a low-income housing property for 12 years, with not so much as one complaint lodged against them. One day, the property manager decided to begin enforcing a restricted breed list, and Reuben was ordered to remove Red or face eviction.

JACKIE, A SINGLE MOTHER

with two young children and a five-year-old German shepherd, Bo (her "third child," as she described him), was forced to move when her rent was increased. She could not find housing that she could afford and that would also allow a big dog. Faced with entering a homeless shelter with her two young children, she had no choice but to surrender Bo to an animal shelter.

WHAT'S THE GOOD NEWS?



IT DOESN'T HAVE TO
BE THIS WAY!

THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES

is working to eliminate housing barriers for people with pets by transforming so-called “pet friendly” policies (which are anything but friendly to pets or their families) to truly “Pets Are Welcome” (PAW) policies that ensure rental properties welcome all cats and dogs, regardless of breed or size. By convincing the rental housing industry that PAW policies are not only safe but financially desirable, we will be able to keep as many as half a million more pets in their homes each year, safe with the families who love them.

Whether you are affiliated with a local shelter or rescue or a pet owner passionate about making positive change in your community, we welcome you to join us in our effort to change the rental housing industry and convert every rental property to PAW.



Together, we can keep families intact and stop the flow of pets being surrendered to our nation's shelters due to housing-related issues.

**THIS GUIDE WILL
SHOW YOU HOW!**

START BY LEARNING THE FACTS



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT PETS ARE WELCOME

1

WHAT'S THE DEFINITION OF A PETS ARE WELCOME PROPERTY?

For a property to be PAW, it must welcome all cats and dogs, regardless of breed or size.

2

WHY DO WE NEED PAW?

A lack of housing that welcomes all pets is one of the top reasons pets become homeless. The HSUS is working to eliminate housing barriers for people with pets by transforming rental properties from “pet friendly,” which typically contains arbitrary provisions like restricted breed lists and size limits, to “Pets Are Welcome” properties that welcome all cats and dogs, regardless of breed or size. With 35% of U.S. households renting, and 72% of those renters owning pets (according to a 2014 *apartments.com* survey), families shouldn’t have to choose between their pet and a place to live, and local sheltering organizations shouldn’t bear the burden of unreasonable and unfounded pet policies. By converting every rental property to PAW, we can stop the flow of pets being surrendered due to housing-related issues.

3

WHAT ABOUT THE OTHER RESTRICTIONS WE FREQUENTLY SEE, LIKE EXCESSIVE FEES, LIMITS ON NUMBERS OF PERMITTED PETS AND DECLAW MANDATES?

At The HSUS, we believe that the most widespread and inherently arbitrary restrictions in rental housing that are tearing families apart and costing pets their lives are breed and size restrictions. You may meet property owners with other types of pet-related policies, and/or those who are willing to relax a few of their breed/size restrictions but not all, and any progress is an achievement to be celebrated! However, the title of an HSUS Pets Are Welcome property is reserved for those properties that have no breed or size restrictions in place.

4

WHY AREN'T PROPERTIES ALREADY ON BOARD WITH PAW POLICIES?

The decision to allow pets, and what types of pets, is often a complex process with many players: owners of properties, who may or may not take the recommendations of their property management companies; individual landlords/managers who seek to operate a smoothly running community; and renters themselves, who play a key role in forming a manager’s opinion of pets. Many of the people you’ll speak with will probably already love animals, and will likely want to share with you pictures and stories about their personal pets. However, it’s also likely they’ve accepted the industry definition of “pet friendly,” and believe that their restrictive policies are necessary for a safe, profitable property.



TERMS TO KNOW AND USE

LANDLORD

Generic term for someone who owns or rents property; not a term typically used by industry insiders.

MANAGEMENT COMPANY

Third-party companies hired to manage day-to-day operations of a rental property. Sometimes they enforce pet policies dictated by the owner, and sometimes they recommend the pet policy. In either case, they usually have influence over policies on the properties they manage.

MULTI-FAMILY

Housing with a minimum of five units that is not occupied by the owner; most apartment complexes are multi-family housing.

OWNER

The property owner(s), who may or may not manage the actual complexes. Can be individuals, companies or investor groups.

PETS ARE WELCOME (PAW)

A campaign of The HSUS and a term used to describe properties and pet policies that are open to cats and dogs regardless of breed or size.

PET FRIENDLY

Current but outdated term that means pets are allowed at a property but are subject to breed restrictions and/or size limitations. Our goal is to convert properties to PAW, where these arbitrary restrictions are eliminated.

PROPERTY MANAGER

A professional managing one or multiple properties. At small complexes they may be hired by the owner; at large corporate properties they are an employee of the management company.

PUBLIC HOUSING

Housing that has been provided with federal assistance for the purpose of planning, developing and managing affordable housing for low-income families, the elderly and the disabled. This can be provided either through offering physical housing spaces or vouchers for discounted rents in housing otherwise available to the general public (often referred to as “Section 8” housing).

RESIDENTS

The term the housing industry uses to refer to their tenants, though “tenant” is the legal term used on paperwork and tenant law documents.



THE NATIONAL PICTURE:

2/3 OF AMERICAN HOUSEHOLDS

have pets (approximately 83 million pet dogs, 95 million pet cats), and pet ownership continues to rise (source: APPA)

6-8 MILLION DOGS AND CATS

end up in shelters and rescues each year (typically half surrendered, half strays) (source: The HSUS)

29% OF DOGS AND 21% OF CATS

in shelters and rescues are surrendered because their owners are unable to find housing that will accept them (source: American Humane)

2.4 MILLION HEALTHY, ADOPTABLE PETS

are euthanized each year due to lack of new homes (source: The HSUS)

72% OF RENTERS

have pets (source: *apartments.com*)

74% OF MILLENNIALS

own a dog, 49% own a cat (source: APPA)

50% OF ALL DOGS

owned in the U.S. are over 25 lbs., and the majority of them are mixed breeds (source: APPA)

THE AVERAGE LENGTH

of tenancy of renters with pets is more than twice that of renters without pets (source: FIREPAW)

THE AVERAGE INCOME

of dog owners is greater than that of non-dog-owners (source: APPA)

ONLY 10% OF RENTERS

have ever lost a security deposit due to a pet (source: *rent.com*)

PET OWNERS

do statistically no more damage to rental units than non-pet-owners. (source: FIREPAW)

YOUR LOCAL PERSPECTIVE:

Anecdotally, you already know that there's a shortage of PAW rental housing where you live; pets are undoubtedly being surrendered to your local shelter due to housing challenges, and you likely have heard stories from friends and neighbors about their struggles finding rental housing that accepts pets.

While national research and statistics do a great job of painting the big picture and stressing the need for reform on a broad scale, it's vital for you to be able to talk about the issues from a local perspective. Being able to tell reporters, advocates, municipal officials and others precisely what's happening in your town, and putting faces, names and stories to those numbers, is much more impactful than simply relying solely on national estimates. Keeping track of local data and statistics will be necessary to measure the success of your advocacy over time.

Get started by finding answers to the following questions about the neighborhood, city, county or state you're looking to influence:

- What types of housing are available and what is predominant (e.g., is your community mostly apartment buildings, single family homes, mobile homes, public housing, etc.)?

- What percentage of housing is owner occupied and what percentage is renter occupied?
- What percentage of rental homes are PAW? How many allow pets with breed and weight restrictions? How about no pets?

The following websites can provide answers to many of these questions. Other sources such as local tax offices, apartment associations, tenant groups and community development organizations can fill in gaps.

- *city-data.com* provides statistical data about cities nationwide
- Rental housing numbers by state can be found at <https://nmhc.org/Content.aspx?id=4708>
- Big city housing fact sheets can be found at www.census.gov/programs-surveys/ahs/visualizations/metrobriefs-2013
- Complexes and residential communities can be found using apartment search sites like *rent.com*, *hotpads.com*, *apartments.com*, and *craigslist.com*
- Individual pet policies are usually included within ads or on company websites



WHAT IS THE IMPACT ON PEOPLE AND PETS?



Local sheltering and rescue groups are your best source for collecting and sharing the devastating consequences of restrictive pet policies. While you may have your own story to tell about the challenges of renting with pets, sheltering professionals regularly witness pets and their families being torn apart by housing conflict. Capturing the total number of pets surrendered each year due to housing challenges, and sharing the devastating effects of those fractured families, will be an important part of your messaging.

If you are not already affiliated with your local sheltering or rescue groups, ask to meet with managers or retention program coordinators to acquire this data. By explaining to them why you are taking on this project, sharing this guide and other resources, and welcoming them to join in the effort you will likely have their full support!

Use the Shelter Pet Project's search tool to locate animal shelters and rescues in your community: theshelterpetproject.org/shelters.



FOR SHELTER AND RESCUE PROFESSIONALS

Use your agency's intake data to determine how many animals are surrendered because of problems finding or keeping rental housing over a set period of time. Compare that number against your total number of surrenders to determine the percentage of pets surrendered to your agency because of housing problems. Don't forget, though, that there are likely quite a few other agencies taking in animals in your community. Ask them to provide you with data from the same time period to get the full scope of the problem. Remember to let them know about your goals for obtaining this information and enlist their support in your advocacy efforts!

MAKING THE CHANGE

The idea that pet friendly housing isn't very friendly to most pets isn't new to most of us who care about animals. Who hasn't experienced either first-hand or through a friend or relative the struggle of finding housing that will take their pets? But what's our most common reaction? *"That's just the way it is; if you have pets, good luck finding a rental that will take them."*

On the property owners' and managers' side, the status quo is even more ingrained. Seemingly all of their industry journals, associations, even sample leases and other documents stress the same message: Pet friendly is the way to be. But, pet friendly by definition includes breed restrictions (the breeds restricted may vary, but existence of a breed list is usually a given!) and/or size or weight restrictions (typically 25-35 lbs. maximum).

Converting the rental housing industry to PAW means changing how the general public as a whole views restrictive pet policies. And it means convincing property owners and managers that it's not only in their financial interest to change, but that failure to change is not an option.

How do we achieve this?

Using a four-step approach to success:

1. Change the Conversation
2. Celebrate PAW Properties
3. Speak Their Language
4. Apply Leverage When Necessary

We have outlined the basics of each step, but these are certainly not the only options to achieve success. Be creative!



YOUR HOME OR YOUR PET? You don't have to make that choice.

The knock on the door from your landlord claiming you have 24 hours to remove your pet can be terrifying. But don't panic—you have rights, and your landlord or home owners association can't just throw you and your pet out on the street.

- You can't be evicted overnight. Eviction is a complex legal process. You must be notified every step of the way and be given a chance to tell your side of the story in court.
- Your landlord can't go into your apartment and remove your pet, or show up and force you or your pet out, without following the legal process.
- Even if your lease doesn't specifically allow pets, or if you don't even have a lease, you may have a legal right to keep your pet under federal, state or local laws.

As scary as it is to face an eviction threat, there are people and agencies in your community that can help. Google "legal aid" or "legal services" to find free or discounted tenants-rights assistance in your community.

Visit humanesociety.org/petsarewelcome to find out more.

While you're working to increase PAW properties in your community, renters with pets will still be struggling to find housing.

You can help them by sharing the resources for renters with pets at humanesociety.org/petsarewelcome, including tips for finding rental housing, tenant rights, dealing with eviction threats and more. Shelters and other organizations can find The HSUS' reproducible Mouthpieces like this one at animalsheltering.org/mouthpieces.



THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES

CHANGE THE CONVERSATION

There's a very good chance your community has very little, if any, knowledge of the devastation the lack of PAW housing is causing. Families are being broken up and local shelters and rescues are filling with homeless pets, but no one is demanding that property owners change their policies! Raise awareness in your community to show that the current status quo not only should change, but can be changed!

Be sure to use the information you collected about the local rental housing landscape as well as local shelter intake data and anecdotes to tell the story about the real, tangible effects of misguided housing restrictions. Share your passion! But most importantly, be sure to let people know that the situation isn't hopeless—rental policies that are hurting pets can be changed, as long as local landlords begin to hear the public outcry.

Consider all avenues available to you to tell the story:

USE TRADITIONAL MEDIA:

Submit letters to the editor and opinion editorials to local, regional, state and even national papers (see [Tips on Writing Letters to the Editor](#) and Sample Letter to the Editor attached at Appendix A); write blogs either on your own website or those of friends/colleagues/others sympathetic to the cause

(e.g. [Tired of taking in pets that already have loving owners?](#)); ask local journalists to consider writing investigatory pieces about the issue in their paper; raise the issue at civic meetings, government meetings and other forums.

HARNESS THE POWER OF SOCIAL MEDIA:

Use your network of social media contacts to encourage anyone who has had trouble finding or keeping rental housing with pets to express their frustrations on public forums; start a polite dialogue on rental properties' Facebook pages about pet policies; and encourage people to share their feedback on pet policies through business review sites like [yelp.com](#) and [foursquare.com](#).

CAPITALIZE ON NEW STORIES:

Whenever a new story about pets and families separated by bad housing policies comes up, use it as an opportunity to generate buzz and revisit the issue in all of your traditional and social media outlets.

There are untold numbers of ways you can help change the conversation about rental housing in your community. Think outside the box to identify the methods that will be most effective in your community.

CELEBRATE PAW PROPERTIES!

One of the best ways to show that PAW policies are feasible and profitable is to highlight and celebrate those that already have those policies in place. Even if you have to start with just one local property owner that welcomes all cats and dogs, regardless of breed or size, look for ways to publicly thank them and hold them up as an inspiration to others!

First, be sure that they are included as a PAW property on The HSUS' Pets are Welcome pages, used by HSUS membership and the public at large to find PAW rental housing (humanesociety.org/petsarewelcome). By registering as a PAW property, they also receive a packet of materials exclusive to PAW properties, including a door decal and web banner designed to show the world

their commitment to progressive pet policies, brochures for residents to help reinforce good pet keeping, and more.

Next, look for ways to celebrate PAW properties by name in social media, the local paper, and other outlets. Remember, the more you can do to spotlight PAW properties in your community and even drive potential renters to them, the harder it will be for the rest of the property owners in your community to claim PAW policies can't work.

And last but not least, be particularly enthusiastic about celebrating those properties who have converted to PAW policies thanks to your efforts! Use each success as a launchpad for more advocacy.



FOR SHELTER AND RESCUE PROFESSIONALS:

Help to further promote PAW properties by using your media outlets to celebrate their progressive pet policies. Feature them by name on your group's Facebook and other online outlets. Consider taking out a paid advertisement thanking them for their policies. And invite them to your fundraising activities and other special events where you can publicly celebrate their PAW policies.

SPEAK THEIR LANGUAGE



In our experience, housing people are animal people too! They love their pets as much as we do and will welcome the opportunity to share their own funny pet stories and photos. Part of the problem lies in the fact that they don't see the impact their policies are having on other people who love their pets just as much. The industry has given them the false certainty that traditional pet friendly (a.k.a. restrictive) policies are the best.

It's also necessary to understand what motivates and moves property managers and owners. Even though they love their pets, they are not necessarily as committed to ending euthanasia or keeping families intact as we are. Their primary motivation, typically, is ensuring that their properties are safe, profitable and that they operate as smoothly and efficiently as possible. The bottom line? They need to make money. Your advantage? PAW policies will actually help them be more profitable than ever!

REACH OUT TO PROPERTY OWNERS WITHOUT PAW POLICIES:

Increasing awareness of the issue and celebrating PAW properties will only get you part-way to your goal. At some point you are going to have to begin connecting directly with properties to ask them to join the growing network of properties that are PAW. Here are some tips to make that initial outreach easier:

- Identify potential properties to target. Check with family, friends, colleagues, social media contacts, etc. to find out if they own rental property or if they can put you in touch with people who do. They may also lead you to realtors, real estate attorneys, local politicians, etc. who may be willing to provide you with additional contacts and introduce you to property owners who might be open to changing their policies. As you begin to exhaust your personal connections, use online classifieds and search tools such as *craigslist.com*, *apartments.com*, *rent.com* and others to identify additional contacts.

- Decide which contacts are most likely to be the "low hanging fruit." Properties with owners/managers already involved in pet causes, for example, or those to whom you have a direct personal connection will be easiest to approach. You may also be more successful starting off with properties that are already pet friendly, open to allowing pets but having breed or weight restrictions, as opposed to properties where no pets are allowed at all. Choose one or two and make contact!
- Try to connect with the property owner/manager by phone or email to ask for a meeting. Email is great for providing information and follow-up phone calls add a personal touch, but don't rely on only one method of communication as preferences will vary. Be sure to arrive to all meetings on time (or better yet, early), wearing attire appropriate for a business meeting. Express your gratitude that they took time out of their busy day to meet with you, and stay professional and gracious no matter what takes place during the meeting.
- If your meeting turns out to be with a lower-level non-decision maker, try to engage him/her as your ally as you take PAW up the chain of command.
- Always end any meeting or call with a commitment to next steps—the next action each of you will take to keep the conversation going.

FOR SHELTER AND RESCUE PROFESSIONALS:

Tap into your expansive network of volunteers, board of directors, staff and even subscribers, followers and members belonging to your organization for contacts in the industry.

AN IMPORTANT NOTE:

Depending on where you live, there may be a number of large-scale apartment communities that are part of a conglomerate, and are not owned and operated by a single individual. At these properties, the local manager typically doesn't have the authority to make changes to the existing pet policy; that authority lies with an executive at the corporate headquarters, maybe in another state. But that doesn't mean that you should avoid speaking with them and expressing your concerns about their pet policies—after all, the best way for the corporate executives to feel pressure to change will be by hearing local property managers report that people are raising concerns. Don't be discouraged by a non-response, but do consider options that have a better chance of quick victory, like keeping your most intensive focus on smaller properties where you have a better chance of speaking directly with the decision maker.



Don't forget that all change takes time—just because we know that switching to PAW policies is the right thing to do, doesn't mean everyone is going to jump on board. Pardon the cliché, but this is a marathon, not a sprint—the key is to be persistent and persuasive and not get discouraged!

FOR SHELTER AND RESCUE PROFESSIONALS:

Be prepared with a list of incentives your organization can offer the residents and managers of PAW properties to help encourage decision-makers to drop restrictive policies. Start by preparing a list of services you already offer to the community and brainstorm a few exclusive extras you can commit to.

IDEAS CAN INCLUDE:

- Discounts and opportunities for residents to participate in special events
- On-site vaccine clinics and adoption events
- Discounted veterinary or dog training services
- Free behavior assessments and/or behavior counseling
- Exclusive subscriptions to newsletters offering tips and solutions to keep pets safe and solve common behavior issues
- Yappy Hours or other small pet friendly events for residents
- Providing marketing and advertising:
 - On your website
 - In adoption packets
 - At outreach events
 - In your newsletter

Remember that property staff and managers are isolated from the results of their restrictive policies: They never see families torn apart or pets entering the shelter as a result of their actions. Help them make the connection by sharing a poignant story of a relinquished pet, or invite them to the shelter for a tour to meet all the amazing animals waiting to be adopted. (This also boosts your credibility!)

SHOW THEM THAT PAW POLICIES ARE PROFITABLE

There is a lot of data to support the fact that restrictive pet policies don't make financial sense for rental properties—owners and managers just don't know it! Use the facts below to help build your case.

- Pet owners, statistically, do no more damage to rental units than non-pet owners (source: FIREPAW), and only 10% of renters have ever lost a security deposit due to a pet (source: *rent.com*). So fears about additional expenses associated with renting to people with pets are largely unfounded.
- The average length of tenancy of renters with pets is more than twice that of renters without pets (source: FIREPAW). Therefore, not only do pet-owning residents NOT cost properties more money, they actually can save the considerable costs associated with unit turnover.
- Pet ownership continues to rise: 65% of households in the US currently share their lives with animals (source: APPA), and 72% of renters have pets (source: *apartments.com*). That means the pool of renters who

own pets is going to continue to increase, and properties that arbitrarily restrict pet ownership will be missing out on the majority of highly qualified renters.

- The average income of dog owners is actually higher than that of non-dog-owners, and dog ownership continues to rise among younger generations (source: APPA); therefore properties that are not open to dog owners will be missing out on the most attractive group of potential renters.
- 50% of all dogs owned in the US weigh more than 25 lbs., and the majority of them are mixed breeds (source: APPA). Typical breed/size restrictions, therefore, exclude half the dog-owning population from consideration as potential tenants.

The facts prove it: Properties with PAW policies can pick from the largest pool of highly qualified prospective tenants, and they actually save money because their tenants stay more than twice as long in their units with no increase in damage or other costs.

***Pets Are Welcome Policies:
Good For Pets, Good For Business!***



**TOP 10 REASONS
TO BECOME A
PETS ARE WELCOME
PROPERTY:**

- Expand your pool of potential renters
 - Increase your profits
 - Increase your retention rates
 - Reduce risk
- Increase your occupancy rates
 - Offer sound pet policies
- Receive support services for pet-owning residents from St. Hubert's Animal Welfare Center at no cost to you
 - Decrease the advertising dollars you spend per vacant unit
 - Double the number of applicants per vacant unit
 - Decrease the time you spend to rent out each vacant unit

**PAW
PETS ARE WELCOME
St. Hubert's
Animal Welfare Center**

To learn more, please contact:

Lauren Huston
973.377.7094, ext. 262
lhuston@sthuberts.org
sthuberts.org

St. Hubert's Animal Welfare Center mailed and faxed these postcards to property managers and landlords to help spread the word about potential business incentives to PAW policies.

DISPEL MYTHS

Most justifications for breedsize restrictions are based on myth or misunderstanding. These talking points can help you overcome most typical objections.

THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS A "DANGEROUS" OR "AGGRESSIVE" BREED OF DOG:

Most property owners and managers are surprised to learn that there is no scientific basis supporting the notion that any breed of dog is more "dangerous" or "aggressive" than another and that the concept is no more than urban legend. In fact, independent experts like the CDC, AVMA and others agree that policies that restrict dogs based

on appearance do nothing to reduce dog bites in communities or enhance public safety. And the fact that half of dogs are actually mixed breeds, rather than purebreds, would make it nearly impossible to enforce breed restrictions even if they had validity. A better practice is for every dog to be treated as an individual and evaluated independently.



THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS AN "APARTMENT-SIZED" DOG:

Many rental properties embrace small dogs and impose weight or size limits (e.g. no dogs over 25 lbs.). But there is no perfect "apartment dog;" many small dogs are vocal and excitable, reacting to every sound they hear throughout the day, while many larger dogs are content to lay silently on the couch all day awaiting their owner's return. Just as no dog should be excluded based solely on misperceptions regarding his breed, no dog should be excluded from a rental property just because he happens to weigh more than an arbitrary size limit.

NON-PET-OWNING TENANTS TYPICALLY WELCOME PETS:

Property owners, of course, want to ensure a safe, comfortable environment for all residents, pet-owners and non-pet-owners alike. But pet restrictions are not necessary to make other residents feel safe. A 2014 *apartments.com* survey found that most residents enjoy living in a building that welcomes pets; in fact, 75% of non-pet owners surveyed said that they either enjoy, or at least are not bothered by, the idea of living in a building with pets.

PETS DON'T CAUSE MORE DAMAGE:

Owners are understandably concerned about damage to their properties, both inside rental units and in common spaces. But the only study performed to date examining the impacts of pets on rental housing found that pet owning renters statistically do no more damage than non-pet-owners (In fact, the worst threat to rental housing is posed by renters with children!).



PAW PROPERTIES ARE STILL INSURABLE:

There are quite a few insurance companies, including major carriers like State Farm, Farmer's and others, that have done away with restricted breed lists because they have no validity.

PET-RELATED AMENITIES AREN'T ENOUGH:

Many properties are already aware that pet-owning renters are desirable, and believe the best way to entice prospective residents is by offering amenities like dog parks, pet washing facilities and even concierge walking services. But unless their policies welcome all cats and dogs, the property is still only accessible by a portion of the pet-owning population. To attract the most highly qualified residents, properties are much better served by simply changing to PAW policies, rather than investing in expensive amenities.

For a full list of talking points, see Appendix B

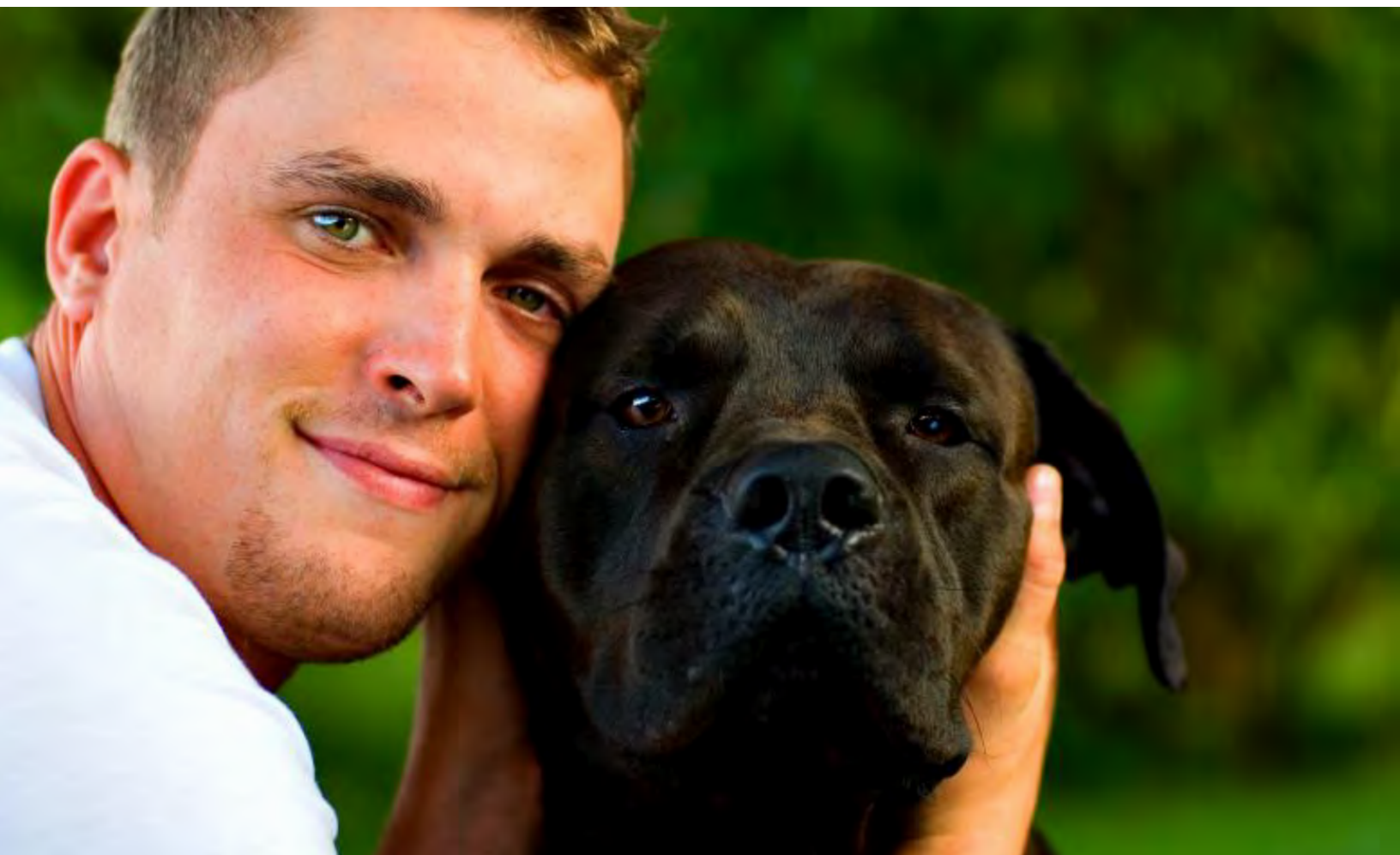


APPLY LEVERAGE

By changing the conversation, celebrating PAW properties and speaking the industry's language, you have ideally established the foundation for every property in your community to embrace PAW policies. But what about the holdouts? Don't close lines of communication, don't be discouraged and don't give up—do turn up the heat! Here are some ideas to consider:

- Just as you publicly celebrate companies with PAW policies, explore options for “naming and shaming” properties that refuse to consider change, using traditional media, social media, business review websites and other options.
- Engage current tenants of those properties to attempt to effect change from within.
- Meet with municipal officials, alert them to the expense associated with caring for all the animals surrendered to the local municipal shelter each year due to arbitrary housing restrictions, and ask to consider options for recouping those expenses from the rental housing community.
- Meet with local politicians who are sympathetic to the cause to see whether they might consider taking action to address housing restrictions; for example, in Los Angeles the City Council passed a resolution requiring landlords and animal advocates to consider options to make more rental housing available to pet owners (see laist.com/2016/01/30/la_city_council_moves_to_make_more.php); you might also consider asking your state legislators to explore options for a state-wide ban on rental housing practices that discriminate against dogs based solely on their breed or size.
- Ask a local animal law attorney to evaluate whether your state has a ban on breed-specific policies, and if so, whether any legal recourse exists against properties violating existing law.

BUILDING ON YOUR SUCCESS



Every accomplishment, big or small, is huge when you take into consideration the lasting impact on both pets and people! Even something as simple as having a landlord say yes to a tenant with just one pet they otherwise wouldn't have considered is progress you should celebrate and use to build momentum.

Be sure to keep detailed records on strategies getting the most attention, gaining the most traction and having the most impact. Repeat what works well for you or your team and take time to review and reset strategies that don't seem to be working as well.

The HSUS Pets Are Welcome campaign team is here to help you with questions, discuss strategy and offer additional examples and support to increase your effectiveness.

We also welcome your insights as you use our toolkit to reach our shared goal of expanding access to housing that welcomes all pets. Tell us how it's going so that we can share your lessons learned and successes with others.

**EMAIL YOUR STORIES,
COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS TO:
petsarewelcome@humanesociety.org**

WE'RE HERE!

SAMPLE LETTER TO THE EDITOR

None of us should have to choose between our pet and our home!

Look around and you’ll see how much our community loves pets. Yet every day, families are being ripped apart because their landlord has decided their dog is the “wrong” breed or size. Once those pets are surrendered to the local shelter, we, as taxpayers, are forced to pay for their care. It’s not fair and it’s not right.

Breed and size restrictions don’t keep properties or people safe. There’s no such thing as a “dangerous” breed of dog any more than there is an “apartment-sized” dog (who thinks a yippy Chihuahua makes a better neighbor than a quiet Great Dane?). These restrictions don’t make good business sense either. Landlords without these restrictions have a greater pool of qualified tenants to choose from, and studies prove that pet-owning tenants tend to stay in their apartments more than twice as long and cause no more damage than non-pet owners. The Humane Society of the United States has more information on why breed and weight restrictions make no financial sense at [humanesociety.org/petsarewelcome](https://www.humanesociety.org/petsarewelcome).

Our community deserves housing that welcomes all pets, regardless of breed or size. None of us should ever have to choose between our pet and our home.



TALKING POINTS

A PAW POLICY IS SAFE

There is no evidence that supports the notion of a “dangerous” or “aggressive” breed of dog. Even independent entities like the CDC and AVMA agree on that. There is also no evidence that any breeds of dogs pose greater liability than others. Restricted breed lists, therefore, are completely arbitrary. Use these [links](#) and [studies](#) to help support your assertion that no breed or type of dog is more dangerous than any others.

Simply imposing basic rules, like a leash policy, that apply to all dog owners, will go further towards increasing safety for residents, staff, and service people than arbitrary breed lists.

A PAW POLICY IS PROFITABLE

Managers and companies are under great pressure to generate profits for the property or their investors. On-site staffers need to meet budgets, prevent apartment damages and maintain an attractive property. Be sympathetic to these needs and demonstrate how PAW boosts the bottom line.

In addition to statistics listed in this Guide, share results from this [Companion Animal Renters Study](#) to discuss financial benefits.

A PAW POLICY IS IN DEMAND

In 2012, only 59% of rental properties identified themselves as accepting pets—just two years later, that number had jumped to 78%. This reflects the growing rate of pet ownership among renters, particularly millennials, and the notion that accepting pets gives properties a competitive advantage in the marketplace. Soon, however, just accepting certain types of pets, or providing fancy amenities designed to entice pet owners, won’t be enough—renters will demand properties that accept all of the dogs and cats they choose to share their lives with, regardless of breed or size (half of all dog owners own medium- to large-sized dogs). Properties that embrace PAW policies, welcoming all cats and dogs regardless of breed or size, will have a competitive advantage over those that don’t.



SIZE IS NOT INDICATIVE OF A PET’S BEHAVIOR OR POTENTIAL TO CAUSE DAMAGE

Some large dogs are quiet couch potatoes, while some small dogs are high-energy and vocal. This makes rental policies that set size restrictions arbitrary and counterproductive. It’s smarter to meet pets in person and make a decision about each pet individually.

[Research shows](#) that pet-owning residents do not cause more damage or other financial concerns than residents who don’t own pets.

PROPERTIES ARE ALREADY COMPELLED TO ACCEPT ALL BREEDS AND SIZES OF PETS

The [Fair Housing Act](#) and the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#) ensure that all cats and dogs who function as emotional support animals may reside in rental housing, regardless of any breed or size restrictions in current pet policies. Requests for accommodation of these support animals cost property owners time and money, both in terms of administrative expenses and lost pet revenues (these animals are not subject to any pet fees or deposits). So if large and “restricted” dogs will have to be accepted anyway, why not simply allow them as pets in the first place and avoid the hassle?

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Tips on Writing Letters to the Editor, http://www.humanesociety.org/action/toolkit/tips_on_writing_letters_to.pdf

Tired of Taking in pets that already have loving owners?, <https://www.animalsheltering.org/blog/tired-taking-pets-already-have-loving-owners>

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links, <http://nationalcanineresearchcouncil.com>

studies, http://www.humanesociety.org/issues/breed-specific-legislation/fact_sheets/breed-specific-legislation-no-basis-in-science.html

Companion Animal Renters Study, <https://www.petfinder.com/dogs/living-with-your-dog/pet-friendly-housing-study/>

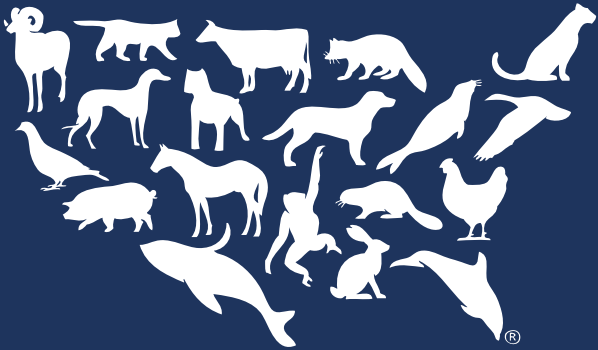
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Research Shows, <http://www.firepaw.org/CompanionAnimalRentersPetFriendly.pdf>

Fair Housing Act, <http://www.humanesociety.org/assets/pdfs/hud-service-animals.pdf>

Americans with Disabilities Act, http://www.ada.gov/service_animals_2010.htm

[Pets are Welcome]



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