

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SHELTER NAME highlights pet care in push for renter protections, rental assistance, and affordable housing in COMMUNITY

City, State (DATE)—The COVID-19 pandemic is putting millions of pets in COMMUNITY/CITY and across the country at risk of being surrendered to animal shelters by the families who love them, but may be forced to choose between finding a place to live and keeping their pets.

The ability of people in COMMUNITY/CITY and other communities across the country to cover the costs of pet care and related expenses has been drastically affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Because the pandemic has exacerbated affordable housing shortages that already existed for renters across the country, including in COMMUNITY/CITY, low-income especially households have often had to choose between paying rent and buying groceries, medicine and other necessities—including pet-related expenses.

As such, SHELTER NAME supports increased rental assistance and a moratorium on evictions for low-income renters in COMMUNITY/CITY experiencing increased housing insecurity because of the pandemic, and urges landlords to remove restrictions of pets in rental units and asks community members who are in a position to help to consider longterm fostering to help families in crisis find a temporary caregiver for their pets rather than being forced to surrender them.

The poverty and structural inequality that puts low-income, Black, and Latinx community-members at a greater risk of being affected by COVID-19 also create barriers to finding safe, affordable, and pet-friendly [housing](#). According to the [National Low Income Housing Coalition](#), in STATE in YEAR there were only # units of affordable housing available for every # extremely low-income households in our state. Meanwhile only 9% of rental housing across the country allowed companion animals without any significant limitations on size or type. Most tenants (82%) with animals reported having trouble finding a rental unit that would accept their pets.

Each year millions of pets enter animal shelters, and one of the most frequently cited reason for relinquishment is a housing, moving or landlord issue. To keep pets in their homes, animal welfare organizations agree on one crucial point: When families are ripped apart, both humans and pets experience detrimental effects on their physical and emotional wellbeing.

QUOTE FROM SHELTER REPRESENTATIVE (call on public to take action, discuss how this impacts the shelter and leads to surrenders, etc).

Landlords can minimize such risk by removing barriers such as breed and size restrictions in the case of renters with pets and by reducing fees in order to give renters with pets more opportunities to find safe housing. Now, more than ever, renters would benefit from increased support and fewer limitations.

Animal advocates and other members of the public can help by engaging groups like LOCAL GROUP or STATE-LEVEL GROUP and supporting RELEVANT LEGISLATION/ORDINANCE to

advocate for rental assistance and an eviction moratorium in **CITY/COMMUNITY** to ensure that low-income renters—and their pets—have safe and affordable housing in rental homes with pet-friendly policies. Learn more about national-level actions through groups like [Opportunity Starts at Home](#), [National Housing Law Project](#), [Eviction Lab](#) and [Just Shelter](#).

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SHELTER BOILERPLATE