

Welcome, pet-owning renters! SPCA Westchester knows how important your pet is to you—they're an integral part of your family. We understand the challenges that can occur when renting with pets. Sadly, housing issues are some of the main reasons that pets are surrendered to animal shelters.

Many landlords are nervous about renting to pet owners. There are people who allow their pets to damage property and disturb neighbors. This gives pet owners a bad rap, but these tenants are the exception. It is important for landlords to see that the overwhelming majority of pet owners are respectful of rental property—renters just like you!

Use the resources on these pages to show potential landlords that you and your pet are exactly the kind of renters they want living on their property.

Finding rental housing for you and your pets

Finding rental housing that welcomes all pets regardless of breed or size can be difficult. You can increase your chance of success with the following tips and ideas:

- Allow as much time as possible to search.
- Research animal-friendly listings and realtors using online sites.
- Reach out to friends and family, using networking sites and social media to uncover connections and opportunities.
- Look for a community apartment guidebook in supermarkets and visit websites like apartments.com and rent.com for listings.

Show off your pet's best qualities

- Create a “resume” for your pet that includes the following to help landlords learn about your pet:
 - a photo,
 - List of favorite activities,
 - Any special training or certifications, written proof that your dog has completed a training class or had in-home training.
 - A short adoption story or information on how your pet became a part of your family.

- Pictures or video showing how your pet likes to spend his days when you're not home.
- Extras items could include a letter of reference from a current or most recent landlord,
- a letter from the vet showing your pet is spayed or neutered and up-to-date on vaccines.
- Invite landlords to meet your pet.
- Be prepared and willing to pay a reasonable extra amount in rent or pay a refundable pet deposit.

Tip: Even if a landlord advertises “no pets” or has size or breed restrictions, some will make exceptions. It is worth a friendly ask over the phone or in person.

When signing a lease...

- ❖ A lease should clearly state what type of pets are allowed and include any weight or size restrictions prior to signing. You don't want any surprises after you move in. Get as much detail on your lease as possible.
- ❖ Pet deposits or monthly fees (if any) should be specified in writing in the lease.
- ❖ Keep a signed copy of the lease stored safely where it can be easily retrieved if needed.