

# Pet-Inclusive Housing Initiative

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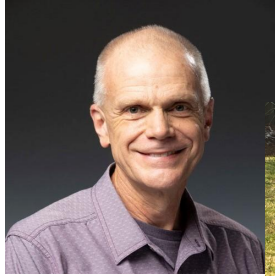
Michelson Found Animals



## Keeping People and Pets Together in Rental Housing



# Introduction



Ross Barker

Program Director, Pet-Inclusive Housing  
Michelson Found Animals



Judy Bellack  
Industry Principal,  
Michelson Found Animals



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# About MFA

## Vision

- People and Pets Belong Together

## Mission

- At MFA, our programs span social enterprises, impact investments, and thought leadership initiatives that champion pets at every point they intersect with our society.



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## Pets and people belong together – no matter where they live.

### **I'm a Rental Housing Operator**

Discover the benefits of offering pet-inclusive rentals, plus pet-positive rental agreements and other resources.

[Learn More](#)

### **I'm a Pet Owner**

Find resources and support for being a community-friendly pet owner.

[Learn More](#)

### **I'm an Animal Welfare Organization**

Looking to support happier, healthier rental housing communities? Explore our resources for plenty of tips and helpful information.

[Learn More](#)

# About HABRI

## Vision

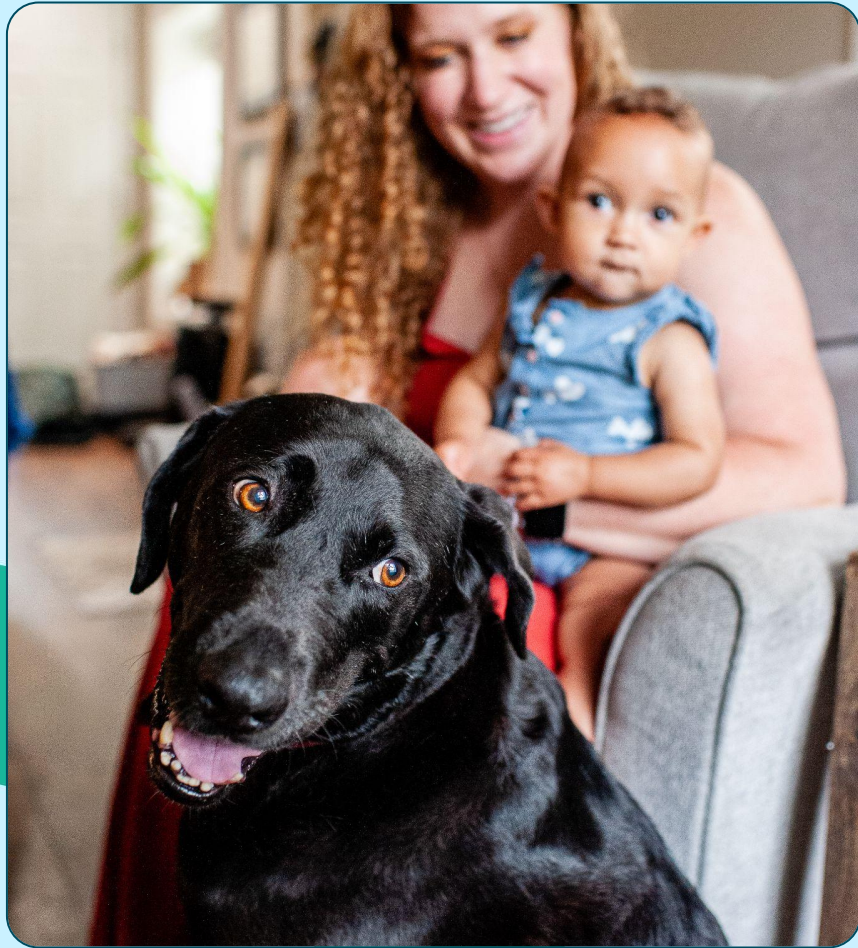
- The human-animal bond is universally embraced as an essential element of human wellness.

## Mission

- Advance, through science, education and advocacy, the vital role of the human-animal bond in the health and well-being of people, pets and communities.







## PIHI Mission

The Pet-Inclusive Housing Initiative was created to build a stronger and more pet-inclusive rental housing industry. Through research, the Pet-Inclusive Housing Initiative develops resources, partnerships, and actionable tools to increase the availability of truly pet-inclusive rental housing.

# Session Objectives

- Articulate the difference between pet-friendly and pet-inclusive and the gap this dichotomy creates in the rental housing market.
- Gain a deeper understanding of market rate housing issues and how to advocate for pet-inclusive policies in housing.
- Learn about Pet-Inclusive Housing Initiative (PIHI) resources for initiating programs and discussions that can increase pet-inclusive housing opportunities in a way that brings mutual benefit to everyone involved.



ASPCA®



**HEART LA**



**MY DOG IS MY HOME**



**HUMAN ANIMAL  
SUPPORT SERVICES**



**Best Friends®**  
Save Them All®



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY  
OF THE UNITED STATES**

# "Pet-friendly" is not well-defined



of owner/operators consider themselves pet-friendly

But, if you factor in...

Breed restrictions

No pet amenities

Limitations on number of pets

Cats okay, but not dogs

Dogs okay, but not cats

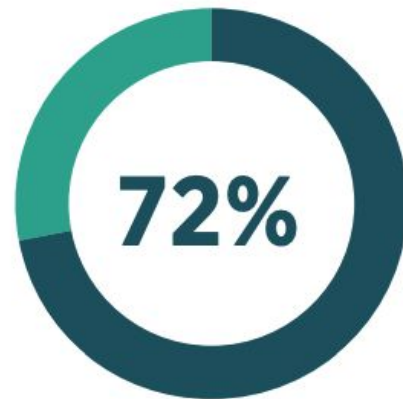
Non-refundable fees

Non-welcoming environment

Monthly pet rents

Size restrictions

...it's no surprise that...



of residents say pet-friendly housing is hard to find

Only 8% of rental housing is free of all pet restrictions

# Pet-friendly ≠ Pet-inclusive

**Pet-friendly:** Rental housing that allows residents to have at least one pet, regardless of other restrictions.

**Pet-inclusive:** Rental housing that has...

- No breed restrictions
- No weight restrictions
- No unreasonable fees
- Basic pet amenities

Where are you on your pet-inclusive journey?

## Pet-Friendly

Dogs or cats generally allowed



Multiple breeds restricted



Dogs over a certain weight restricted



Pet fees required



No pet amenities



## Pet-Inclusive

Dogs and cats allowed

No breed restrictions

No weight restrictions

No unreasonable pet fees

Basic pet amenities

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## Zoom Poll Question #1

**Have you ever helped a client get an ESA designation for their pet to help them find housing that would not accept the pet otherwise?**

# Pet owners make for great renters

- **83%** of rental housing operators say pet-friendly vacancies are filled faster
- **79%** of rental housing operators say pet-friendly vacancies are easier to fill
- On average, residents in pet-friendly housing stay **21% longer** than those in non-pet-friendly housing
  - Translates to residents staying about 10 additional months





# Pets are a benefit for the community

71%

Pets bring people together  
within a whole community

92%

Pets are important members  
of the family

66%\*

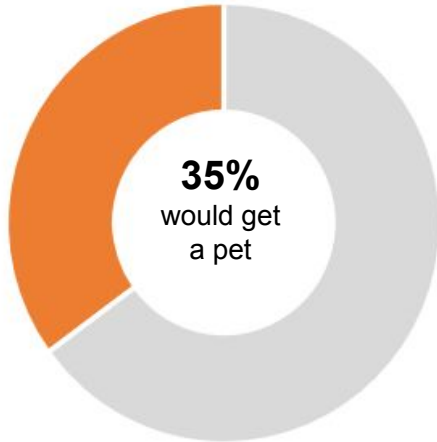
My pet has brought me  
closer to my neighbors

## Property Managers

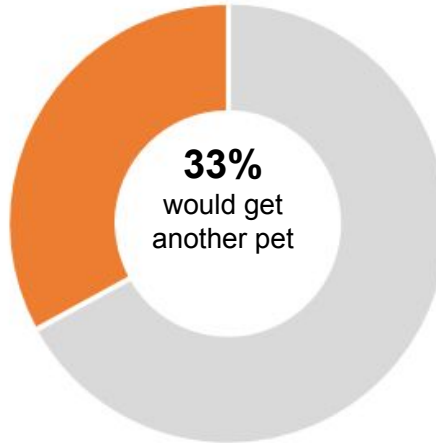
**93%** of property managers agree that pets are  
important members of the family

# Restrictions negatively impact future pet ownership

**Non-Pet Owners w/ Rental  
Housing Restrictions**



**Pet Owners w/ Rental  
Housing Restrictions**



**One-third of renters  
would get first pet (or  
another pet) if  
restrictions were lifted**

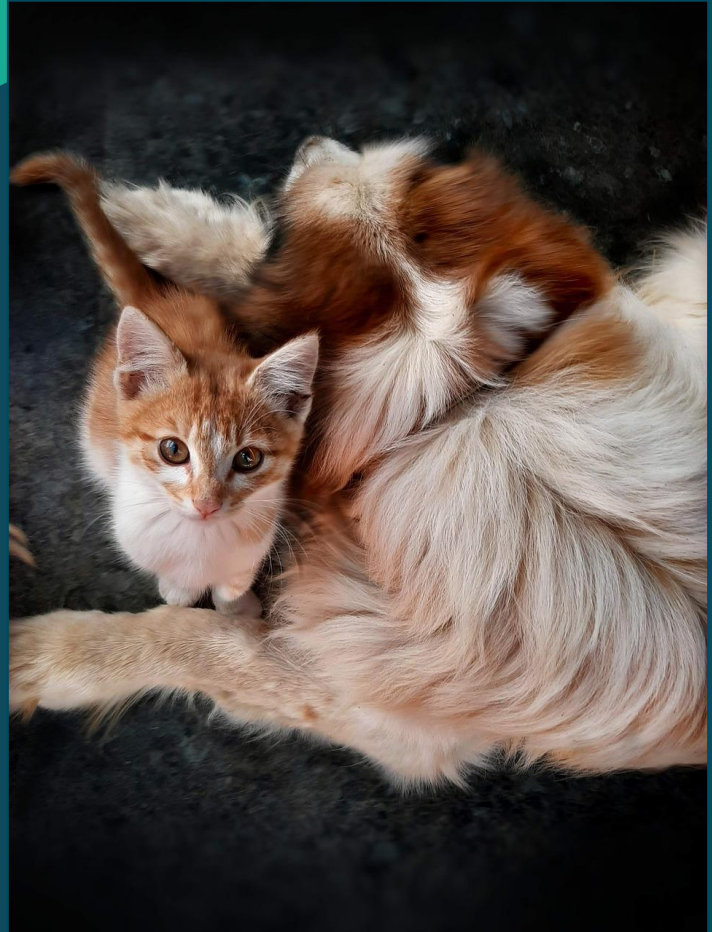
**Millions of  
additional animals**

## Zoom Poll Question #2

**In your experience, do potential adopters say they can't adopt dogs of certain breeds and sizes because of rental housing restrictions?**

Why aren't more pets  
allowed in rental  
housing?

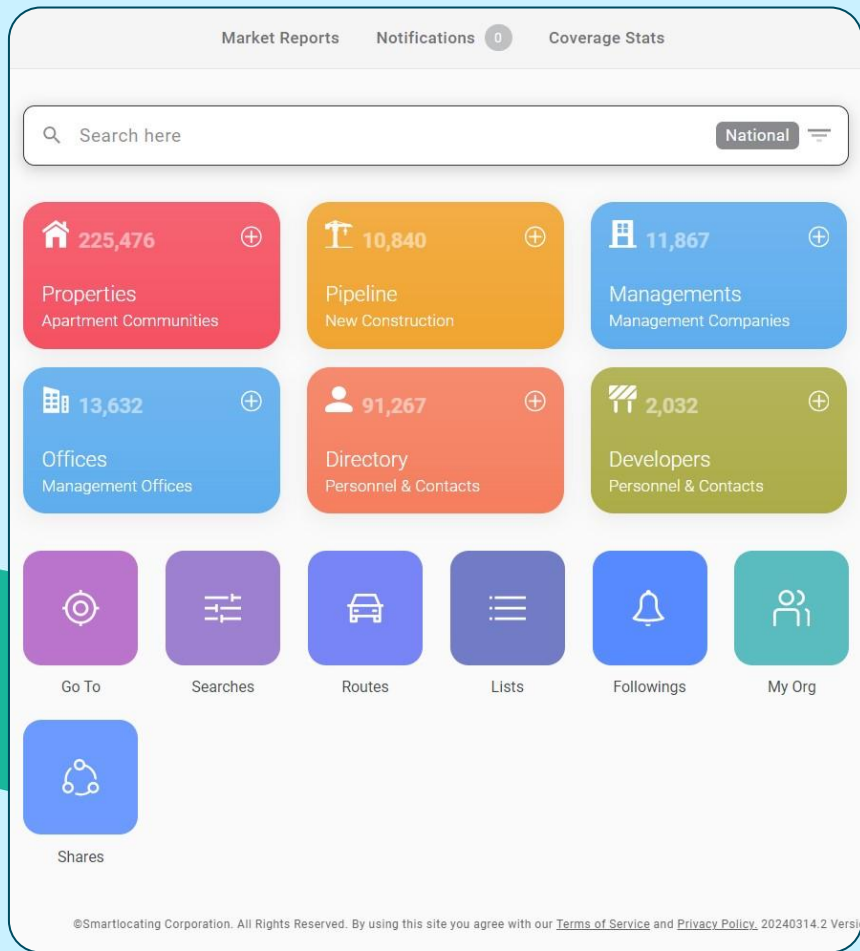
Lack of  
recognition  
that there's a  
problem



## Zoom Poll Question #3

**In your experience, of these three housing-related policies, which is the one owners cite most often as the reason for needing to surrender a pet?**



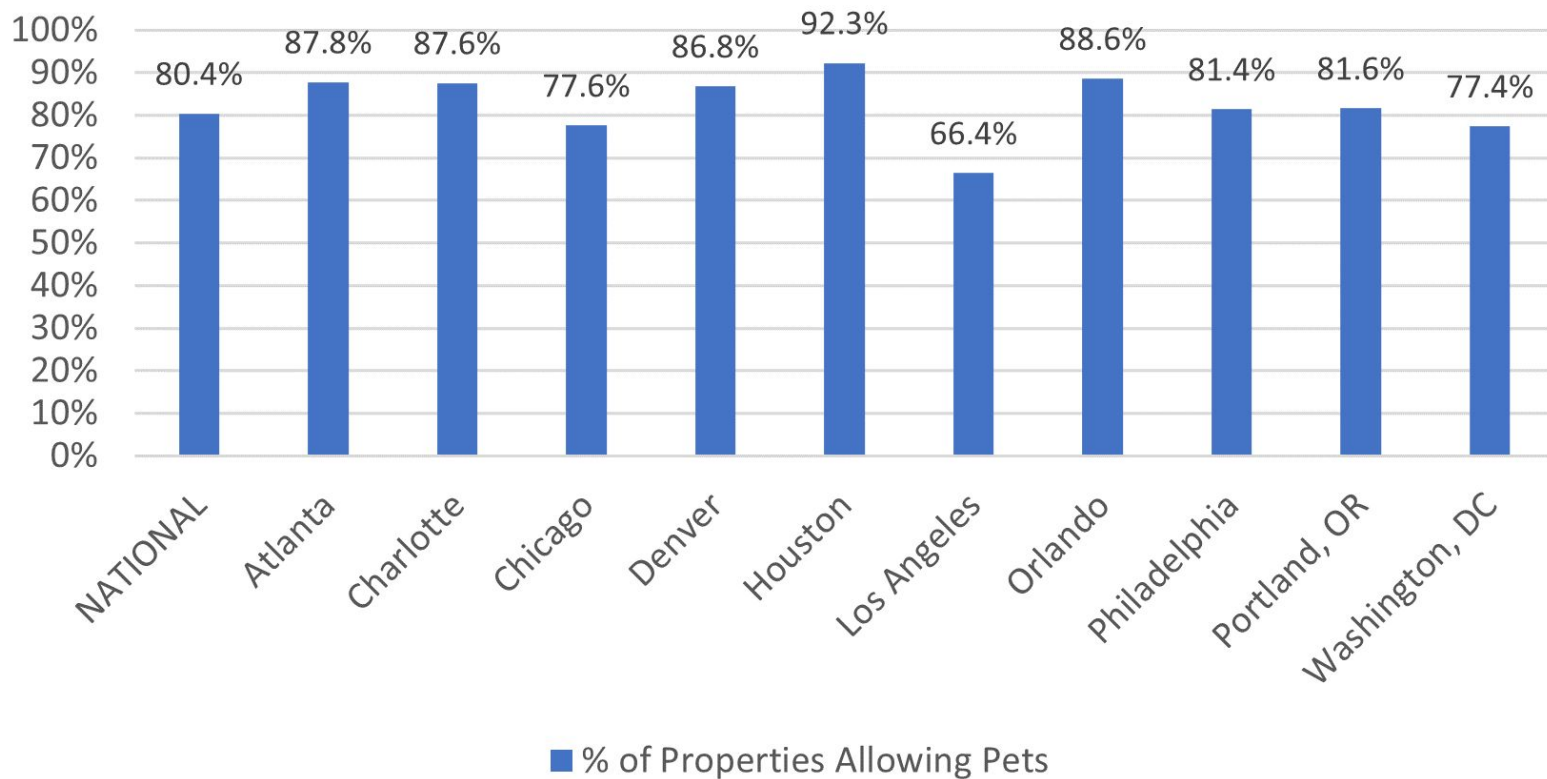


# Smart Apartment Data

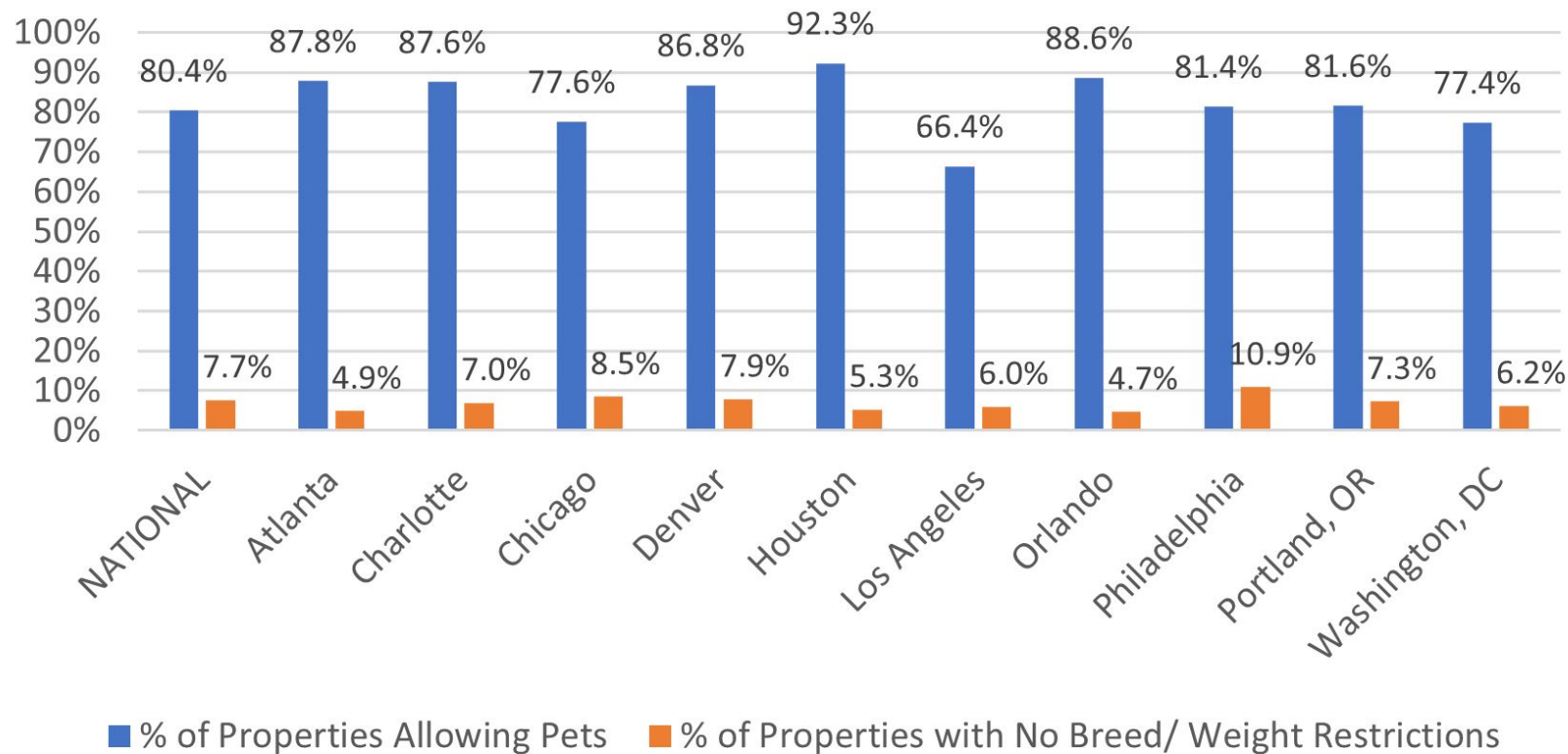
Over 80,000 active properties and 16 million units

Data on pets allowed, breed and weight restrictions, pet-related fees, pet amenities

## "Pet-Friendly" Properties



## "Pet-Friendly" vs. Pet-Inclusive



# But there are other reasons



Risk

Damages

The  
unknown

No  
perceived  
benefit

# Top concerns are not insurmountable

## Insurance and liability issues

- Pet-inclusivity is a minor factor on rental property insurance pricing
- More than two-thirds of owner/operators are aware of non-restrictive insurance products
- Pet-owning residents bear primary responsibility for damage or injury caused by pets
  - ◆ Can be solidified through renter's insurance

## Pet damage to rental units

- Only a small minority of pets cause damage
- Average repair cost is far less than the average refundable security deposit
- Many residents choose to pay for damages out of their own pockets

## Risk of large animals and certain breeds

- Dog bite data has proven to be unreliable
- Many organizations, including AVMA, CDC, and ABA strongly oppose breed bans
- Growing body of research points to the inadequacy of breed in predicting behavior

## Responsibility to sustain the health and safety of the entire community

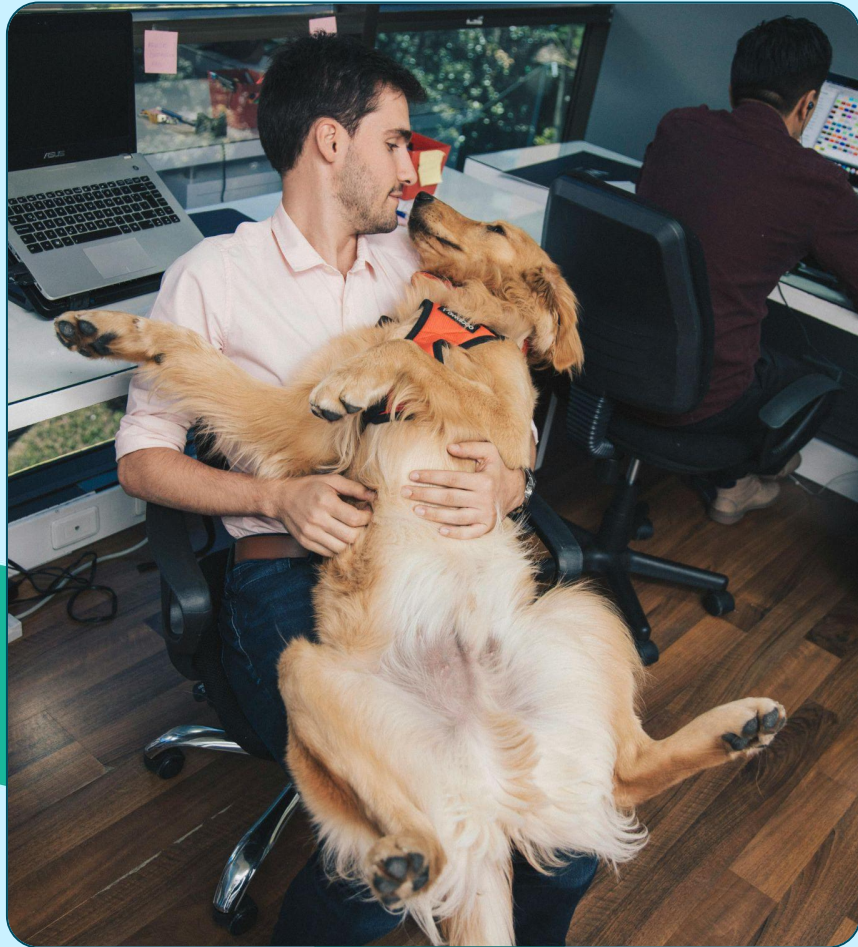
- Clear policies and expectations can help avoid negative outcomes from allowing pets
- Training resources can be made available to pets and their owners
- The human-animal bond can help create communities that are more socially cohesive



# And there are clear benefits for housing operators

- ★ **Expanded market**
  - Pets are a renter priority
  - Gen Z and Millennial renters
- ★ **Higher retention**
  - Fewer vacancies
  - Lower turnover cost
- ★ **Strong communities**
  - Clear expectations
  - Love of pets is common ground





## The People Part

Many rental housing operators recognize the joy of having a companion pet and have fur babies, too!

In a recent survey of onsite office team members, 63% of respondents said that helping people was the most gratifying part of their job.\*

*\*Grace Hill / Multifamily Insiders 2024 Employee Satisfaction Survey*

## Zoom Poll Question #4

**Have you ever engaged with a rental housing operator about their pet policies?**

What  
can be  
done?

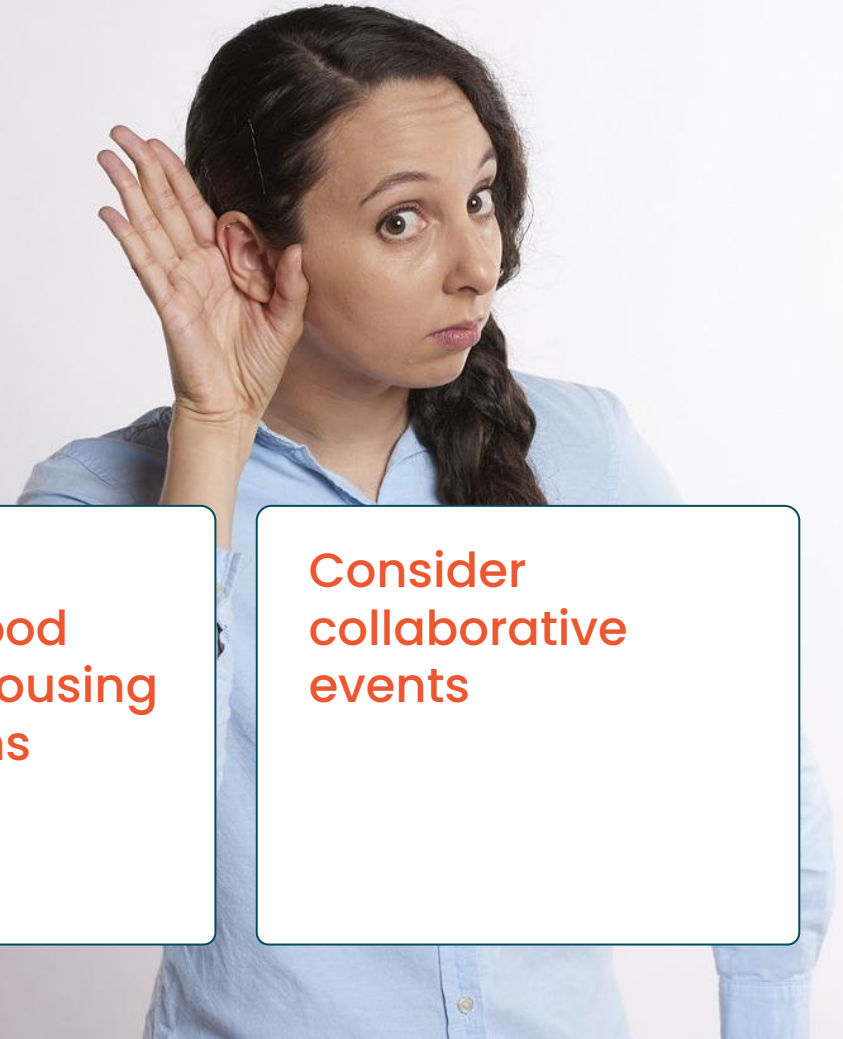


# Solutions: Inreach to RHOs

Ask about pet policies - and be willing to listen

Look into neighborhood and local housing associations

Consider collaborative events



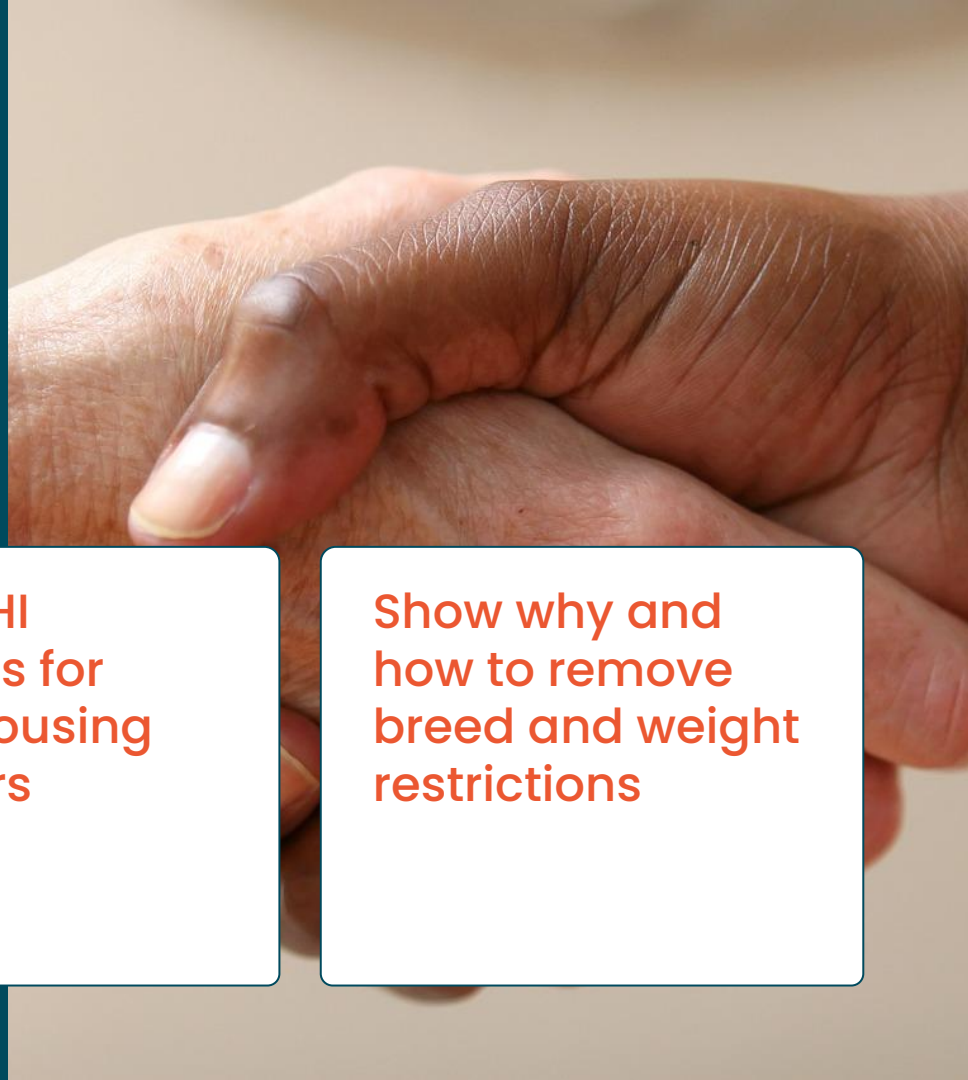


# Solutions: Outreach to RHOs

Share case  
studies and PIHI  
report

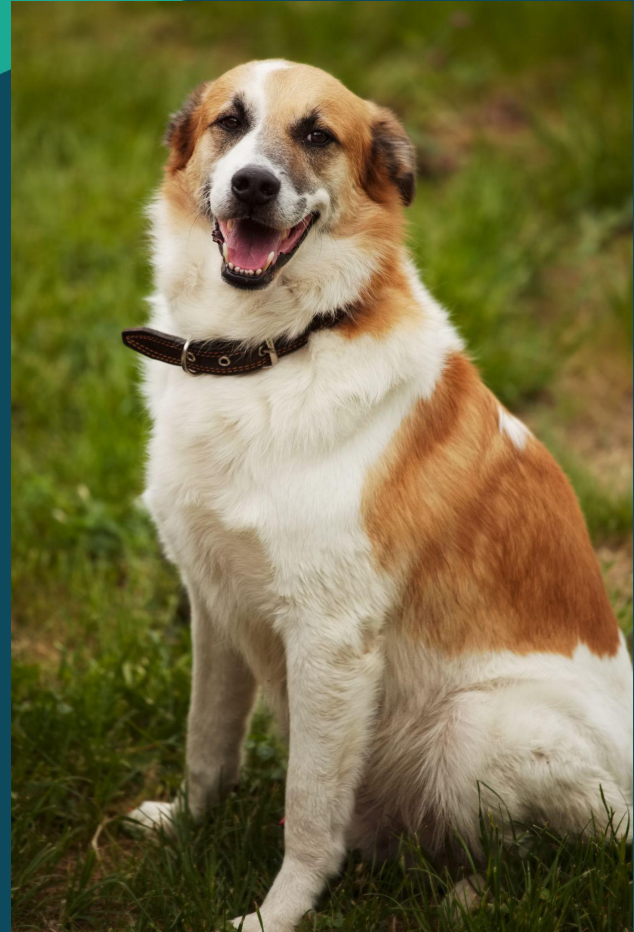
Share PIHI  
resources for  
Rental Housing  
Operators

Show why and  
how to remove  
breed and weight  
restrictions



Other, simple ways to  
help

**Avoid feeding  
the  
misconceptions.**



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# Industry Insights & Updates

PIHI NEWSLETTER | MARCH 2024



# PIHI Resources

How to Talk to Rental Housing Operators About Their Pet Policies

How to Work with Local Rental Housing Communities to Set Up Adoption and Foster Events

How to Celebrate Pet-Inclusive Properties

Understanding the Fair Housing Act

How to Get Funding for Pet Deposits, Fees, and Rent

More Pet-Inclusive Resources for Animal Welfare Organizations



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## How to Celebrate Pet-Inclusive Properties

### Leverage your media

- Include blurbs about these properties on your website and in your newsletter
- Include mentions in any e-blasts
- Don't forget links to the property
- Be sure to mention these properties when speaking with the media

### Give them some love

- Consider sending a thank you note for helping renters stay with their pets, and minimizing shelter surrenders
- Surprise them by stopping by to hand-deliver a card and a sweet treat

### Spread the word

- Keep a list of the pet-inclusive properties in your area and post it in your office and on your website; have copies to hand out
- Take this list with you when meeting with rental housing operators in your area
- Make sure all your employees know about this list and share it with others

PETSANDHOUSING.ORG



**[petsandhousing.org](https://petsandhousing.org)**

Thank you!

Questions?



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Saving Pets, Enriching Lives.

