

Pet-Inclusive Housing

Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society (EHS) supports pet-inclusive housing and policies.

Definitions:

Pet-Friendly Housing: Policies which permit pets, but may place restrictions on breed, height, weight, or number of pets, and may have unreasonable pet fees.

Pet-Inclusive Housing: Policies which do not place restrictions related to a pet's breed, height, weight, or number of pets, and which do not have unreasonable pet fees.

Summary

- Inability to secure pet-inclusive housing is a common reason for the rehoming and relinquishment of animals.
- Pet-inclusive policies encourage the inclusion of animals in communities and allows for families to stay together.
- Pet-inclusive policies which evaluate pets as individuals and do not have unreasonable pet fees should be advocated for.

Rationale

- Housing may be pet-friendly, however restrictions and additional costs severely limit the number of families with pets who are able to find housing. Common pet restrictions and costs include:
 - Weight;
 - Height;
 - Breed;
 - Number of animals;
 - Requiring animals to be declawed;
 - Monthly pet fees; and
 - Larger deposits.
- Pet-inclusive policies do not place such restrictions on pets and allow for more families with pets to obtain housing or shelter.
- EHS encourages for animals to be evaluated for tenancy based on their individual traits and history, as opposed to restrictions based on single factors such as weight, height or breed. EHS advocates for breed neutral policies-see EHS position statement "Dangerous Dog Laws and Breed Restrictions".
- There is a shortage of pet-inclusive homes in the market. As a result:
 - Tenants may be subjected to a variety of unregulated pet fees, and/or unable to afford housing which allows pets;
 - Tenants may hide pets from landlords;
 - People may be forced to choose between their pets and housing, leading to sleeping rough, delaying or not leaving dangerous home environments, or relinquishing their pets.

- As the number of homes with a pet increases, the need for pet-inclusive housing policies is critical to support the human-animal bond and alleviate strain on animal shelters and rescues.
- Pet-inclusive housing benefits landlords. A 2005 study found that pet-friendly rentals had:
 - Increased rental profits;
 - Longer length of tenancy;
 - Lower vacancy rates;
 - More applicants for vacant rental units;
 - Reduced time to rent a vacant unit; and
 - Reduced money and time spent advertising.
- Promoting pet-inclusive policies present an additional benefit of having pets in communities. Besides improving the health of individuals, pets may also foster connections between community members.
- EHS encourages those who influence the supply of pet-inclusive housing and housing policy such as landlords, condo boards, property management companies, human shelters, agencies managing emergency shelters, and public housing agencies to implement pet-inclusive policies.

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